This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

C
8343
895.10

43.895.10

Harvard College Library

FROM THE

BRIGHT LEGACY

One half the income from this Legacy, which was received in 1880 under the will of

JONATHAN BROWN BRIGHT

of Waltham, Massachusetts, is to be expended for books for the College Library. The other half of the income is devoted to scholarships in Harvard University for the benefit of descendants of

HENRY BRIGHT, JR.,

who died at Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1686. In the absence of such descendants, other persons are eligible to the scholarships. The will requires that this announcement shall be made in every book added to the Library under its provisions.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF DAVID FERRIS,

AN

Approved Minister of the Society of Friends,

LATE OF WILMINGTON IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

REVISED AND CORRECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL COPY IN MANUSCRIPT.

PHILADELPHIA:
MERRIHEW & THOMPSON'S STEAM POWER PRESS,
Merchant Street above Fourth.
1855.

9343 825.10

INTRODUCTION.

DAVID FERRIS, the subject of the following Memoir, was the son of Zachariah and Sarah Ferris, late of New Milford, in the State of Connecticut. His grandfather, Samuel Ferris, came from Reading, in England, and was one of the early settlers of the Massachusetts Colony. David's parents had a family of eight children, of which he was the third.

When a large family of children are remarkable for the propriety of their conduct, or become greatly useful in society, it is almost always found, on a close inquiry, that their mother has been eminently qualified, by her piety and other virtues, for the important concern of education. That such was the character of David Ferris's mother, is evident, as well from tradition as by authentic documents yet extant in the family. In a short account of his parentage, written many years after her death, by her son Benjamin, he says, "My mother lived several years after my father's decease. She was of

the Puritan sort of people—a woman of great understanding, and well versed and read in the Scriptures and other good books;—of extensive knowledge, and having a memory to exceed most persons that ever I knew. She was of a pious and religious disposition, being like Mary of old, who, as our Lord said, had chosen that good part that should not be taken away from her. Her exemplary conduct and behaviour made a deep impression on my mind when very young, even when not more than nine or ten years old." This character of his mother is amply confirmed by her son David in the following work, where in several places he refers to her concern for his welfare, whilst struggling through the temptations and difficulties of his early life.

The following brief memoir has many touching references to her maternal care. In one place the author says, "My mother being a religious woman, and much concerned for the good of her offspring, both temporally and spiritually, was frequent in giving us good advice and admonition, that we might shun the paths of error; and teaching us, by her own example as well as by precept, to walk in the ways of virtue, which lead to peace. This was a

great help to us while young, and was not easily forgotten when we came to maturity."

Her son Benjamin, in the short account before mentioned, says, "She was of the Puritan sort of people." It has become customary in modern times to think and speak disrespectfully of the Puritans, as a severe, morose, repulsive sect. This has arisen partly, perhaps, from the character of the New England hierarchy in the seventeenth century, which, in connection with the civil Government, passed and executed many severe laws against the innocent dissenters from their creed. But the early settlers of Massachusetts were by no means true representatives of the *old* or *primitive Puritans*. The latter, as early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, separated from the established Church, on pure conscientious grounds, the same, in many particulars, that induced George Fox and his religious associates to withdraw from its communion. They were a sincere, upright, spiritually-minded people; in their ministry and worship approaching much nearer to the standard of Truth, as afterwards raised by Friends, than any other society existing in the fore part of the seventeenth century. A very large portion of George Fox's fellow laborers had sat under the Puritan ministry; and there can be no

doubt that, under that ministry, their minds were prepared for the further unfolding of Divine truth, which was afterwards effected through his instrumentality.* The Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through faithfulness (in many instances *unto death*) were a means, in the Divine hand, of holding up a light to the world which can never be wholly extinguished.

In his early minority David Ferris was favored with a remarkable Divine visitation, under which he was made willing to renounce all the ensnaring allurements incident to that period of life. Whilst he was careful to live in a state of watchfulness and prayer, the knowledge of divine things was unfolded to his understanding, and, by dwelling under the cross of Christ, his yoke became easy and his burden light; childish vanities were distasteful to him; to use his own language—"the world and the things thereof lost all their lustre," in his sight.

* For evidence of the truth of this sentiment, see "The Gospel Treasury Opened," by John Everard; "The Heavenly University, wherein is the highest teaching,—the teaching of the heart," by Francis Rouse; "The Crucified and quickened Christian," "Christ's Spirit a Christian's Strength," and other works of William Dell; "The Way to the Sabbath of rest, or the Soul's progress in the work of the new birth," and other treatises, by Thomas Bromley; all published in the 17th century.

He was now approaching his twentieth year, a period when the world and its glories are usually presented to the youthful mind with their strongest attractions. In recurring to this period, he very feelingly expresses his regret that, not keeping his eye single to the Divine Light, he lost his heavenly Leader, and then "the world rose again with splendor to his view." In this state "earthly delights and vanity" became objects of his ardent affection, so much so, that he "took great pleasure in airy and vain company." His mother, ever watchful over his best interests, saw his danger, and was alarmed. She mourned over his fall, and urged his return. During this season of alienation from his Divine Leader, he suffered grievously under a sense of his transgression, and was not restored to the heavenly Father's house until, like the Prodigal Son, he had endured all the horrors of a famine, during an awful separation from the only source of real enjoyment.

Our late Friend, George Dillwyn, whose worth as a member and minister of the church of Christ will long be remembered with affectionate regard, gave it as his judgment, that David Ferris's Memoirs were amongst the most instructive he had ever read, because the author *recorded his errors*

A TESTIMONY

FROM WILMINGTON MONTHLY MEETING, IN THE COUNTY OF NEW CASTLE, ON DELAWARE, CONCERNING

DAVID FERRIS.

He was the son of Zachariah and Sarah Ferris; and was born in Stratford, in Connecticut government, New England, the 10th of the Third month, 1707. His parents being Presbyterians, brought him up in that way; his mother being religiously disposed, and much concerned for her offspring, frequently gave them good advice and admonition; which had some good effect with this, our friend, as he has often been heard to express.

We find by some remarks he left, that about the twelfth year of his age, he was frequently visited and called unto by the divine Monitor in his heart, to forsake evil and youthful vanities, which he delighted in; and, by being in a good degree faithful thereto, was for a time preserved from them; but for want of attending to *that* which would have continued to preserve him, the pleasures and vanities of this world got hold of his mind; so that he took much delight in airy and vain company, music and dancing, and such like amusements, until about the twentieth year of his age; when it pleased the Lord to visit him with a sore fit of sickness, which proved of lasting advantage to him, as it occasioned him to take up a fresh resolution, to forsake the evil of his ways, and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart; which he was, through mercy, favored with ability in measure to perform.

He still continued in profession with the Presbyterians, not having any knowledge of Friends; although, by at-

tending to the teachings of divine grace, he became convinced of the principle we profess; and hearing of a yearly meeting of Friends to be held on Long Island, went to it, with desires to discover whether they were a living people or not, for such he desired to find; where he met with what he often longed for, a people that worshipped God in spirit and in truth; which was a great strength and confirmation to him, in forsaking the errors of his youth. And by yielding obedience to these inward motions, he gained strength, and was more and more enabled to bear a faithful testimony to the truth, as it was made known to him.

In the Sixth month, 1733, he removed to Philadelphia, where he joined in religious fellowship with Friends. In 1735, he married Mary, the daughter of Samuel and Sarah Massey; and in 1737, removed to Wilmington, in New Castle County; where he resided the remainder of his days.

He made some appearance in the ministry about the year 1734; but through unfaithfulness to the Divine call, he from time to time put it off, and remained in a neglect of duty therein upwards of twenty years; although he was often warned, both immediately and instrumentally, in a remarkable manner; which, at length, produced a submission to the Divine will; so that, in the year 1755, he was made willing to give up thereto, and therein found great peace.

He travelled through divers parts of this continent in the work of the ministry; and, by certificates produced on his return home, it appeared that his conduct, conversation, and labors abroad, were exemplary and edifying; tending to the advancement of truth and righteousness. His doctrine was sound, and acceptable to the honest-hearted, though sharp against the hypocrite and rebellious; yet tender to the mourners and disconsolate.

He was very serviceable in our meetings for discipline; which, with other meetings, he diligently attended; not suffering his outward affairs to hinder him from what he

believed to be his religious duty. And, although he followed shop-keeping for a living, it was his practice to shut up his shop, and take his family with him to week-day meetings; often expressing, for the encouragement of others, that he believed it was attended with a blessing. He was free and open-hearted to entertain Friends, and concerned to bring up his children in plainness, and instruct them in the fear of the Lord, believing *that* to be the best portion they could inherit; remarkably charitable to the poor, and often administered to their necessities.

Bodily weakness attended him during the last three years of his life; and near the close of his days he was much afflicted with sickness, which he bore with patience; often expressing his prospect of his approaching end, and his resignation therein, saying, "All is well." Several Friends being present, after a time of silence, he in a lively manner repeated the expressions of the Apostle—"To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

He departed this life the 5th of the Twelfth month, 1779, aged upwards of seventy-two, a minister about twenty-four years. On the 7th of the same month. his corpse was interred in our burying ground in Wilmington.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF DAVID FERRIS.

When I consider the situation of man in his fallen state, and the great change that all must experience before they can be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God; that, in order to attain to this happy state, all must experience a mortification of their natural tempers and evil propensities; must know the "old man" to be slain, and the "new man" to be put on; which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness; and that, in order to walk in the new and living way, we must know old things to pass away and all things to become new. I say, when I consider these things, I feel a concern for my fellow men, that they may become acquainted with this change. And, apprehending that I have had some acquaintance with it, by passing through various dispensations of trial and affliction, I am inclined to leave some account of them to posterity, to show to those who follow, that the Lord is ever near, and will be found of those who seek him early; that he is long suffering towards those who go astray, and merciful to all who sincerely turn to him; hoping it may minister information and encouragement to weary travellers in the same road, and induce them cheerfully to comply with divine requirings.

I wrote a short account of the fore part of my life in Latin, continued to about the twenty-fifth year of my age.

The many difficulties and dangers in my way, and sometimes doubting whether I should hold out to the end, induced me to keep my history in a language unknown to those about me. I concluded that if I should hold on my way, I might afterward translate it into English, and add to it, as I found freedom. And now, after about twenty years' experience of divine support and preservation, having great cause to say that "God is good to them who seek him," that none seek him in vain, and that his tender mercies fail not, I am inclined to translate it, hoping it may be useful, at least, to some of my posterity.

I was born at Stratford in Connecticut, New England, the 10th day of the Third month, 1707. My parents, Zachariah and Sarah Ferris, made profession with the people called Presbyterians; and in that way I had my education. My father, while I was very young, moved to a place called New Milford. It being a newly settled place, I had not the advantage of a school; but, under the care of my mother, I soon learned to read in the Bible, and understood that there was a Supreme Being, who made all things, and preserved and upheld them in their order: and that, as the workmanship of his hand, I stood accountable to him for every part of my conduct. About the eighth year of my age, I was informed that the Divine Being was self-existent; without beginning and without end; and not being able to understand how that could be, I sometimes thought so intensely on the subject that I became much bewildered. At length it was shown me that the proposition was too high for my comprehension; and I received something like a reproof for searching into things beyond my capacity. From that time I was fearful of prying into such deep mysteries.

My mother, being a religious woman, and much concerned for the good of her offspring, both temporally and spiritually, was frequent in giving them good advice and admonition; desiring that we might shun the paths of error; and teaching us, by her own example, as well as *by precept*, to walk in the ways of virtue, which lead to

peace. This was a great help to us while young, and was not easily forgotten when we came to maturity. Death was frequently the subject of my thoughts; and, in the twelfth year of my age, I was often called by the Holy Spirit to forsake evil and leave youthful vanities, which I then delighted in, and to be sober and circumspect in all my ways. By attention to the Divine call, and to the reproofs of instruction daily communicated, I was preserved from evil, and saw something of the beauty of holiness; the happy state of the righteous in the world to come, and also the moving situation of the wicked when they put off mortality and hear the awful sentence pronounced, "Depart ye cursed."

About this time a little circumstance occurred that much affected my mind, and afforded me lasting instruction. As I was riding through a river, against a rapid current, a young dog, attempting to swim after me, the stream being too strong for him, could not keep up with my horse. He appeared to be in the utmost distress, even to desperation. As my mind was filled with pity for the poor animal, it was opened to my view the awful amazement a poor soul must be in when leaving the world destitute of hope. As simple a circumstance as this may appear, it was, I believe, of use to me for years. I was very careful of my thoughts, words and actions for several years afterwards; the fear of the Lord preserving me from evil. My mind was humbled under a sense of my daily want of divine help; and as I abode under a religious concern, attending to the reproofs of instruction which are the way to life, an increase of light and life was communicated to me; so that I came to delight in virtue. As my desires and care for divine things increased, the knowledge of them was unfolded. I could truly say the Lord was my delight, and for some years, as I dwelt in his fear, his yoke was easy, his burden light, and all childish vanities were burdensome.

While I kept near the spring of life, with my mind fixed on the true object, the world and the things thereof

lost all their lustre. But, alas! not keeping my eye single to the light, I lost my Leader; and then, by little and little, the world rose again with splendor to my view. Earthly delights and vanity got such hold of my affections that I took great pleasure in airy and vain company. This was an unspeakable loss to me, and I mention it that others may take warning by my harms. It seemed almost miraculous that I was ever restored from this lapsed state. My mother mourned over me, and often advised and urged my return; showing me the danger of such a course of vanity. Yet I was not wholly forsaken by my inward Monitor and former Guide. At times it reproved me; at other times called me, wooing and pleading with me to return. Sometimes, in the midst of my vanity, I saw that I was in the way to death; and that it would land me in everlasting confusion if I did not forsake it. Sometimes my concern was so great, that I was obliged to leave my vain companions, and retire so full of trouble and distress that I had no satisfaction until a considerable time afterward. During these seasons of affliction I was ready to promise to forsake my vain course of life, and to covenant with the Lord that I would do so no more, provided he would be pleased to grant me his assistance. But my efforts, being too much in my own strength, proved unavailing. Vanity so prevailed that I took great delight in music, dancing and other vain amusements.

In the twentieth year of my age I was visited with severe illness, so that I, and those about me, had very little hope of my recovery. Then death stared me in the face; and a dreadful scene of woe, anguish and misery opened to my view. It appeared clear to me that if I were then taken off the stage of action I should be unavoidably lost; and that evil spirits were waiting round me, to convey my soul to the mansions of misery and everlasting darkness; so that my horror, anxiety and distress were inexpressible. In the utmost anguish of mind I cried to the Lord for help, promising amendment, if more time and *ability were* afforded me; and it pleased a kind Provi-

dence to be propitious to me; so that I was restored to health, and in about a month was able to walk about.

After my recovery I remembered the distress I had been in, and the promise I had made, when under the dreadful apprehension of everlasting misery and destruction. I saw the necessity of a faithful performance of my vows. I was sensible that there was a work to be done; and that if I did not now comply with my promise, I should have to pass through the same, or rather a worse scene of misery and distress. It appeared probable that a more convenient opportunity for repentance than the present would not be afforded; and I concluded that this was the time to turn from vanity; forsake my evil ways; and renounce all my sensual delights. But, when I had resolved to begin the necessary work of reformation, the adversary of all good tempted me to believe that it was too late to think of obtaining peace with my Maker; for this plain reason, "that as there was a day or time, in which men might be saved; so, if they let that opportunity pass away unimproved, it would be in vain to attempt it afterward." He suggested, that I had had such a day of visitation, and had passed by it; that I had been uncommonly favored with help, and for a time did not accept of it; that I had been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost; that I had tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and had fallen from it; so now it was impossible that I should again be renewed unto repentance; seeing I had crucified the son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. This reasoning appeared so strong, and so consonant to the apostle's doctrine, that I gave up the point; and concluded it was too late to attempt a return, with hope of acceptance.

From that time, during the space of about two months, I never sought for mercy; but remained in utter despair. My distress was as great as could well be supported without loss of reason. I daily wished for death, so that it

might occur without laying violent hands on myself; which I was not much tempted to do.

It was usual with the young people of our neighborhood to spend much of their time in vanity and merriment; forgetful of God, their Creator; as if they had been made to please themselves in the gratification of a sensual mind, and, provided they were not profanely wicked, the elderly part of the Society were not very uneasy with it. But, in the year 1727, there was a great reformation at New-Milford, among the young people of the Presbyterian profession. They had been awakened by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit on their own minds; and were brought into great concern for their future well being; under which they had no outward assistance. The apostolic doctrine of "Christ within," and of being "led by the Spirit of God," was denied by the priest and many of the people, who appeared to have little sense of a divine Teacher in themselves; but asserted that revelation had now ceased, and no such thing was to be experienced in this day. As I had been the companion of those young people in vanity and dissipation, they (knowing nothing of my inward condition, which I had not discovered to any) generally applied to me for counsel and advice; and I was much concerned on their account; being desirous of affording them assistance, although I had no hope of relief at that time for myself.

My trouble continued and increased; so that I had no satisfaction in life. On a certain day, in this season of despair and deep distress, I concluded to leave my native land and go into some foreign country, to spend the residue of my days; where I purposed to remain unknown, and that none of my relations or acquaintance should know what was become of me. Being, in my own apprehension, a poor, lost, reprobate creature, I was not willing to remain at home, to be a disgrace to my relations and country people. This was a day of the deepest affliction and distress that I had known. Towards evening, as I

followed the plough, my attention was arrested, as it were, by a still, small voice, saying, "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin." But I put it by; saying in my heart, "It is too late; there has been a day wherein I might have been cleansed; but, alas! I have let it pass over my head for ever." Some time after this, (perhaps half an hour,) while I was musing on what land I should flee to, the same words passed through my mind again, with more authority than before, and commanded my attention rather more closely than they had done; but I again put them by; concluding I had lost all right to apply them to myself. So I resumed the consideration of my flight to a foreign land. In the mean time my sorrow and anxiety of mind increased; so that I was not well able to support it, or go on with my business. But while I was still musing, the same words unsought for, and unexpectedly, passed through my mind with greater power and authority than at at any time before, "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." At the sound of them my soul leaped for joy. I felt that a door of hope was opened, and said in my heart "If *all sin*, why not *mine?*" Then a living hope sprang in my soul. I saw the arms of mercy open to receive me, and the way cleared before me as a road through a thicket.

I was now filled with joy unspeakable; thanksgiving and living praise to my Redeemer arose in my heart for the experience of so great and marvellous a deliverance; that my feet should be plucked out of the mire and set upon a rock; that I, who had no hope just before, should now be favored with a well-grounded assurance of pardon and acceptance, was a mercy never to be forgotten.

From this time I sought for divine assistance; and, in infinite kindness, a hand of help was extended for my restoration, and the healing of my backslidings. Then I was enabled to sing upon the banks of deliverance, and praise the name of Him who lives for ever. The Holy Spirit, that blessed Teacher, with whom I had formerly

been favored, but had forsaken, was now restored, as a leader and teacher, to direct and instruct me in the way to peace and rest. From this time my mind, after such great favor, was humbled and made subject to the cross of Christ, and heartily willing to take it up, daily, and follow him, my kind leader, in the narrow way of self-denial. And as I was obedient, he led me to forsake my vain course of life, and all those youthful delights and sensual pleasures which were displeasing to my dear Lord and Master; who in wonderful mercy had lifted me out of the dungeon, and heard my prayers in a time of deep affliction. He now became my director in all things; showing me clearly what my duties were; and enabling me to perform them in an acceptable manner. But if, at any time, I acted in my own will, I lost my strength, and found no acceptance nor benefit by my performances; by which I gradually learnt, that I could do nothing, acceptably, without the immediate assistance of the spirit of Christ the Redeemer. Thus I found a necessity to apply continually to my only and all-sufficient helper; and humbly to wait for his assistance and direction; and as I was faithful, he led me into the path of life, which, if continued in, will terminate in everlasting peace.

Having gradually learned that nothing of a religious nature could be effectually done, without the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, I may humbly acknowledge that I was wonderfully favored with divine instruction; far beyond my expectation, and infinitely above my deserts. I was led, as it were, by the hand, and helped over every difficulty that attended me. But the adversary of my soul tried every stratagem to draw me aside from the path of virtue. He strove, night and day, to deter me from walking in the narrow way; representing the difficulties to be so great that I could never hold out to the end; and that all my attempts would be in vain. He seemed to be continually present, whether I was awake or asleep, disquieting my mind as much as possible. But my prayer was incessant for divine aid; that

a stronger than he might appear for my help, and dispossess him. And, in about a year after I had been raised from the pit of despair, as before related, I received a promise that "the God of peace would bruise Satan under my feet shortly." Faith was given me to believe in this promise; and I hoped for a speedy deliverance. But he continued to afflict me with his assaults, with temptations, and evil suggestions, for some months afterward. Notwithstanding which, I still believed the time would come, according to the promise, and I prayed for its fulfilment, in the Lord's time. At length, a stronger than he did indeed come, and cast him out, and wholly dispossessed him; and not only bruised him under foot, but removed him far from me.

The power of the enemy to assault, or in any wise to disquiet me, was now taken away; neither was he able to lay any temptation before me. Now was my soul daily filled with thanksgiving and living praise for this deliverance; as well as for all the other manifold mercies and favors of God, from day to day, bestowed upon me, "a worm and no man." To the honor of his great name, who hath done marvellous things for me, and to the praise of his grace, I may say, that the adversary of all good was not only thus prevented from troubling me; but the fountain of divine life was opened, and the water thereof flowed so freely and plentifully into my soul, that I was absorbed in it, and so enamoured thereby, that all the riches, honors, and vain pleasures of this world, had no place in my affections. In this state I longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ; which, I was sensible, was better than to be here. I do not know that there was one moment, whilst I was awake, for the space of nearly two years, in which I could not sing living praises to him who liveth for ever and ever. No losses, crosses, or disappointments did, in any degree, disturb me; at least not perceptibly, either to myself or others; for my delight was in objects very different from any thing this world can give, or take away. I dwelt as in the mount,

out of my enemy's reach; and, apparently, out of danger from any evil. Here I hoped to remain all the days of my life, and that I never should be moved.

However strange this relation may appear to many, I believe it is strictly true. I am sensible that some, who have no experience in things of this nature, may smile at this narrative; but others may be glad to see in it a relation of circumstances corresponding, perhaps, to their own experience of trials passed through, or favors received from the divine and all bountiful hand. I have no vanity in penning this account; but rather a fear, lest the succeeding part of my life should not correspond with the favors conferred upon me, by a gracious benefactor; as stated in the preceding account.

While I dwelt as on the mount, as before related, my spiritual eyes were opened; my understanding enlightened and enlarged. I then wondered to see that the world, as far as my knowledge of it extended, was more in show than substance; better in appearance than in reality; that even the true form of godliness was too little to be seen. I had conceived that the people among whom I was educated were better than the other professors of Christianity; but when my eyes were thus anointed, to see clearly, I found very little true religion among them. Primitive purity appeared to be very much lost. I was affected with sorrow and mourning, on account of the great declension among the professors of the Christian religion, in general: for the more I was concerned to examine the subject, and sought for divine wisdom, the stronger were my convictions, the clearer my views, of a general apostacy; that a life of self-denial, a dwelling under the cross of Christ, was very little regarded.

Before this period I had had a desire to acquire a knowledge of the languages, and other learning, and now my mind became satisfied that it would be right for me to pursue these objects; but, before I give an account of my progress in this pursuit, I will recur to a subject men-

tioned before. It was said, that in the year 1727, some of my companions were brought under a concern for their future happiness. This concern spread, and so increased among the young people, at New-Milford, that it became general. Many that had spent much of their time in vanity and mirth, were, at this period, exercised for their eternal welfare; crying out, as some did formerly, "What shall we do to be saved?" I think there were nearly sixty of us, in about one year, who joined in close communion with the Presbyterians, in the participation of the bread and wine. As we were faithful in the discharge of our duty, as far as it was manifested to us, and endeavored to advance in the path of virtue, our understandings became illuminated, so as to perceive some things in a different light from that in which they were seen by our fellow professors; both with respect to practical and doctrinal points. Sometimes we ventured to mention some of our sentiments, on subjects in which we apprehended there was a difference between us, which soon involved us in trouble.

We were accused of holding heretical opinions; and brought before the church to answer the accusation. Neighboring ministers were called to deal with us, on this occasion; but they made little of it. I had previously stated, in writing, the points of difference between us; with the reasons for our dissent; and when the congregation met to deal with us, I presented it to them, whereupon a committee was appointed, to examine the document, and to judge whether it would be proper to read it in that assembly. On their return, they reported favorably, and it was read. When any difficulty occurred, I was desired to explain my meaning, which I did accordingly. After it was read through, they sat silent for some time. At length, an ancient man rose, and said, "If this be all wherein our younger brethren are supposed to differ from us, there is nothing in this writing that I cannot unite with, and say 'Amen' to." Others, of the foremost rank, expressed the same opinion; upon which

it was concluded that our sentiments were not so heterodox as to prevent communion with us. It was settled accordingly; and we were pronounced members in full communion.

But, notwithstanding this conclusion, a report was circulated, and generally believed among the people, that we were heretics; and I was considered as a leader among them. Some called us Quakers; but we knew nothing of that people, and thought it as ill a name as they did; though we considered it our duty patiently to bear the reproach cast on us for the Truth's sake.

But to continue the account of my proceedings relative to the acquisition of learning. I first went to the teacher in our parish, and staid with him, as a scholar, but one month, until he refused to teach me any further, alleging, as a reason for his refusal, that my opinions were too heretical to admit of my reception into the college; so that my labor would be useless; or, at least, not answer the end proposed. He was a weak man; and had but little experience in religious concerns, in which I had now acquired some knowledge; besides, he was not scholar enough to teach me to any purpose; which made me willing to leave him.

After this I soon concluded to go to Danby, abo u thirty miles from my father's house, and to place myself under the tuition of a teacher whose name was Moss. I had heard that he was a good scholar, and a good Christian. These qualities I thought would make the situation pleasant to me; and I was not disappointed. Whilst I was preparing to go to him, I was suddenly taken sick, and became so ill, that in a few hours it appeared doubtful whether I should recover. I was in hope that my departure was at hand; though I did not then see how I should be disposed of. Whilst I was lying very ill, though my understanding was calm and clear, and my will fully resigned, my mother came to me, and asked me if I thought I should die with that illness. I answered, I did not know how *that* might be; but should

be glad to leave this world, if it were the will of God. After some further discourse, my mother left me alone; and soon after, my soul (as I apprehended) departed from the body. On which I was filled with joy; concluding I had done with this world, and all its troubles. Being now freed from the shackles of mortality, I went on rejoicing toward the land of bliss with great alacrity of soul, and as I departed, I thought I saw my body lying a lifeless lump of matter. But as I went forward, I was met by some excellent person whom I took to be the Son of God; and who informed me that I must not go; saying, "Thou must return to the body; thou shalt not die but live, and declare the wonderful works of the Lord." I was troubled to think of returning, to be confined to a body of clay. However, I stood still, musing and waiting for direction; when it appeared to be my duty to submit. I then said, "The will of the Lord be done," and immediately I was in the body. Soon after this, my mother came again into the room, and repeated the question she had put to me before; to wit, whether I thought I should die at that time. I answered, "I shall not die with this illness." She seemed surprised that I should answer so positively, and without hesitation; and then queried how I knew that. "For," said she, "you told me, about an hour ago, that you did not know whether life or death would be your lot at this time." I then gave her an account of the circumstances just related; which satisfied her respecting my confident answer. She was filled with joy, and thankful acknowledgement to the Fountain of all Good, that I was restored to her, and that he had been so propitious to me as to reveal his will in so clear and indubitable a manner. At this time my mother and I were both Presbyterians; and continued in that profession several years after this event.

Being now sensible that my continuance here was required for a longer season, I became very thoughtful, lest I had been mistaken in supposing I had obtained the

knowledge of my divine Master's will, respecting my learning the languages, &c., and was brought into a strict examination, whether I was in the way of my duty in making the attempt; for I had now a clearer sight that human learning was insufficient to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel than I had before. Being humbled, and self entirely reduced, I was willing, if I could discover that my attempt was wrong, to acknowledge my fault to him who knoweth all things; repent of my rashness; and confess my error; especially to those to whom I had made known my intentions on the subject. I had told some of my companions that I saw it my duty to acquire learning; and some considerable time before there was any probability of it, I had gone so far as to say that I should obtain it. If, therefore, I had been mistaken, there was now great need of my knowing it, and making proper acknowledgments on every hand; and to be more careful in future, not too easily to take anything for granted, and then report it as a certainty. During this sickness, which continued about three weeks, I earnestly desired that I might receive wisdom, to direct me in a way acceptable to the Lord; and although I had a strong desire for the acquisition of knowledge, yet I was willing to submit to the disposing hand of Providence; and durst not ask for anything but with entire submission to the Divine will; being sensible that if I obtained it in any other disposition, a blessing would not attend it. At length, being on the recovery, and very much exercised in mind on the subject, I had, one morning, as I lay in bed, such a clear manifestation of the Divine will thereon, as left no doubts on my mind respecting the course I ought to pursue; and so I proceeded to prepare for admission into college.

After this I soon recovered and went to the teacher at Danby, of whom I had heard so good a character, as before mentioned. I was well satisfied with him, as I believe he was with me. He was a religious, tender spirited man; and, I believe, "a lover of good men," in

the apostle's sense. After I had been with him some time, one of his congregation said to him, "I understand you have a heretic with you, preparing for admission into college." He replied, "I wish all my congregation where such heretics as he is." To which his neighbor made no reply. This he told me himself soon after it occurred. I stayed with him six months, when his other scholars left him; and as it did not suit him to attend on me alone, I went to one Robert Trett, at New-Milford, and spent about six months with him; when he thought me sufficiently learned for admission into college. Accordingly I went there, passed an examination in relation to my learning, and was admitted without any mention of heresy.

After my admission I endeavored to keep humble and to live in the Lord's fear, so as to be a pattern of lowliness of mind. I was desirous to be serviceable to mankind, and endeavored to keep to that which alone could qualify for it.

Here I think proper to remark, that in one respect I was apt to err, until experience taught me better. This was in talking too much about religion in my own will and time. At length I found it tended to poverty; and I learned, when in company, not to be forward to enter into any discourse concerning religion, or any other subject; but to be content to keep silence and be esteemed a fool; until Truth arose, a subject clearly presented, and liberty was given for conversation. Then I found a qualification to speak to the edification of others, and my own peace and satisfaction. I mention this for the benefit of others; being convinced that many who have had experience of the Truth, and have in some degree witnessed a change of heart, have talked so much on religious subjects, that their souls have become barren; so as scarcely to know when good cometh.

Now, as I dwelt under a humble sense of my own nothingness, and sought for the direction of Truth, I found the Lord to be near by his Spirit, to instruct me in all

things necessary to be known; which were clearly manifested from time to time, as I was able to bear them.

At my entrance into college my principles generally corresponded with those held by the Presbyterians. But I now began to think it was time to examine for myself, and no longer trust in the judgment of my forefathers. I found it necessary to subject my principles and practices to a strict scrutiny, because I began to be doubtful of some of them. But I was convinced that, as a rational creature, simply considered, without a divine instructor, I was not competent to the undertakiug. I clearly perceived that all right understanding in spiritual concerns must proceed from the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, and that we could not come to the knowledge of God, nor of any thing relating to his kingdom, without it.

This belief was very different from that held by the people I made profession with, so that I had no assistance from them. On the contrary, their conversation, their preaching and their books were against me. I had no outward help but the Bible, and that I could not understand without Divine assistance. There were no people with whom I was acquainted who believed in the light of Christ within as I did; so that I had none to look to for instruction, in any difficulty, but to Him. But being very desirous to know the truth in all things, I made application to Him who I believe to be the only teacher of his people; and as I waited upon him for instruction, my understanding was gradually enlightened, so as to perceive many errors in my former creed, and to discover the truth in opposition to the doctrines of my education.

That which stood most in my way, and appeared to be a grievous hardship to mankind, as well as a great dishonor to a just and righteous God, was their *unconditional* election and reprobation; which would, according to their apprehension of it, shut out the chief part of mankind from all hope of mercy; as they believed they were the Lord's only people, and that but few of others were within the pale of election. Yet I believe there

were some amongst them who had a more extensive charity. I was much concerned on this subject; and being earnestly desirous to discover the truth, it pleased the Lord to open my understanding clearly to perceive the error of this doctrine; and I was enabled to believe that Christ, who "gave himself a ransom for all," would "have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

I rejoiced in this discovery; and when I was fully convinced of my former error on this subject, I proposed, for the consideration of one of my fellow students, whether we had not been mistaken in that point of belief. We reasoned on the question many times, until he was almost convinced that we had been in error on this subject. He did not then know that my sentiments were different from his own, but supposed that I proposed the question only for the sake of argument, and to hear what could be said for and against it. I purposely hid my real belief from him, apprehending it not prudent at that time to discover my genuine sentiments.

By the time we were willing to close the debate on that subject I had something new to propose, and as strange as new to my opponent. When we were at leisure from our studies, we entered into debate upon it; and so, from time to time, we reasoned the point till we were willing to leave it. Thus, as things opened to my view, and my mind became clear in any point of doctrine in opposition to my former belief, I proposed it for his consideration; and so we reasoned upon it as long as we thought expedient. Thus we proceeded from time to time, debating on divers points of doctrine, until my opponent was partly convinced of the truths I advanced, and became satisfied that I believed in the doctrines I produced for his consideration. But as I thought it not a proper time to make my opinions public, I advised him not to expose them at present; to which he consented. We spent our leisure time, for two or three years, in discussing religious

subjects, new to him, and I but recently convinced of the truth of them.

I had before this period heard of a people called Quakers, but was unacquainted with any of them. As I had never seen any of their writings, I knew not what doctrines they held, but ascribe all my knowledge in divine things to the inward manifestations of grace and truth, the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It was Christ, the light of the world, the life of men, who opened to me the scriptures, and gave me a discerning of their meaning; and as I was faithful and obedient to the pointings of Truth, I was favored with further and clearer discoveries thereof. In this state I felt desirous that others should come to be acquainted with it, and continued to give to my fellow student aforementioned my views on the various subjects that presented. We reasoned on them, as they were brought under consideration, until we had discussed the principal disputable points of doctrine. I do not remember that we omitted any thing that Robert Barclay had treated as a doctrinal point, although, at that time, I had not seen any of his writings, nor ever heard of them as I remember.

I have mentioned these things to show that, according to Christ's declaration, "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God;"* and that "we need not that any man teach us, but as the anointing teacheth us of all things."†

Though we had debated all those points as before related, yet, at leisure hours, we again discussed them, and became much of one sentiment on the various subjects, as will appear when I come to relate the particulars of our final separation.

By this time I had some view of a false ministry and a false worship, which had been introduced into almost all the churches of professing Christians with which I was acquainted; but my sight in these two particulars was not

* *John vii.* 17. † 1 John ii. 27.

so clear as it was in many others which we had debated. Although I perceived a defect in the ministry, yet I did not then see that it was altogether wrong, nor did I then know that it was wholly of the "letter that killeth;" but afterwards I obtained a clearer sight and knowledge thereof. At this time I thought as a child and understood as a child, with regard to these subjects. And this was also my state respecting divine worship. I did not clearly perceive that all worship performed in the will of the creature, and without the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, was truly will-worship and idolatry. But in process of time I clearly perceived that this was the case. After our minds were satisfied on these points, I first met with Barclay's Apology. But I must now leave my classmate and our discussions and go back a little.

When I had been at college about a year, the rector, or chief ruler, sent for me to his house, in order to converse with me concerning those reports that had been circulated of my being a heretic. After I had, at his request, seated myself by him, he told me he had a desire to hear, from my own mouth, an account of my state, adding, that it was not from any dissatisfaction in his own mind concerning me, for he was well pleased with my conduct since I became one of their members; that he believed the reports were chiefly owing to misapprehension, ignorance and ill-will; and that he wished to know from me the grounds of it. This was the substance of his communication. I replied, that if he would be pleased to have patience with me, I would give him a plain account, and be as brief as I well might, to be intelligible. I gave him a relation of my first setting out on my religious journey; of my travels, exercises and experience to that day, which took up about an hour and a half, as I supposed. He was all this time very quiet and attentive, not giving me the least interruption. I thought he listened with much satisfaction. When I had concluded we sat silent for some time. He seemed to be so

much affected that he could not easily speak. After recovering, he said, "Ferris, I bless God for giving you eyes to see what you see." He said nothing more to me, except just to inform me that he was well satisfied with that opportunity, and so dismissed me.

I do not know that I concealed from him any of the principles I held at the time referred to, when I was called a heretic; but I did not unfold to him all my views at the time I was speaking, being sensible he could not bear it. He was a sincere professor and a lover of good men, and afterwards showed a kind regard for me; saying more in my favor than I apprehended I deserved, although not more than he believed to be true. And this was the case with many others whose expectations of my future usefulness had by some means been raised; in consequence of which I was much esteemed by the most worthy class of people; but being kept humble and low in my mind, and seeing my own weakness and infirmity, I was preserved from the snares of popularity, although they made my trials the greater, as will appear in the proper place.

After this interview with the rector I resumed my studies, which I pursued with diligence, being desirous to be found in the way of my duty in every respect, that a blessing might attend my undertaking. I was careful of my thoughts, words and actions, endeavoring to be exemplary and serviceable to all about me.

I now became increasingly thoughtful on religious subjects. The doctrines I had been taught, and the way of worship in which I had been educated, were subjects of anxious concern. I was desirous to ascertain whether they would bear a strict scrutiny. On trial I found them defective; and hence arose the many debates I had with my class-mate, as before related.

About the middle of the last year of my residence at the college, I met with Barclay's Apology; and after reading it I let my class-mate also peruse it, with whom *I had before* discussed the doctrines there treated of. He

read the work attentively, and made little or no objection to it, but told me Barclay's arguments were unanswerable. Several other thoughtful scholars, to whom I lent the book, after they had read it, made the same acknowledgement, with very little objection or opposition to the reasoning of its author.

I continued at the college until near the time for taking my degrees; and being convinced of the errors of my education relating to the doctrines we held and the worship we performed, I apprehended it was time to consider what was best for me to do; and being favored to see that a qualification or commission derived from man was not sufficient for the gospel ministry, I concluded not to take their degrees, nor depend upon their authority.

Although I agreed with Barclay on doctrinal subjects, yet I knew not that I could join with the Quakers, or any other people with which I was acquainted. I still continued a member of the Presbyterian society, attended their meetings, and partook of their bread and wine. But I was not free to sing with them, not having been, for some time before, in a condition to sing; besides, it did not appear to me an acceptable sacrifice, or any thing like divine worship, for a mixed multitude to sing *that* of which they knew nothing by experience. My exercise of mind daily increased; for now the time was near at hand in which I must leave them. This was a day of trial; for, although at the commencement of my religious progress, I had forsaken all the youthful delights and vanities with which I had been diverted, and had been enabled to trample them all under my feet, expecting never again to encounter such difficulties; yet, now I found that *self* was not sufficiently mortified in me. To be brought down from the pinnacle of honor; to be esteemed a fool; to be trampled under foot by high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, was hard to bear. As I observed before, I had been much esteemed, though, as I was sensible, more than I deserved. I knew the people had undue expectations of my future usefulness,

and that if I left the college, as I thought it my duty to do, my credit would sink, and my honors be laid in the dust; and then, instead of being caressed and exalted, I must be neglected and despised.

But I had other difficulties to encounter. My father looked forward with hope that I would be an honor to him and his family. He had promised to set me out in the world in the best manner his circumstances would admit. I knew, that if I were obedient to my convictions of duty, he would regard it as a disgrace to my family and connexions; and would be more likely to turn me out of his house, than in any way to assist me. Besides, I had heard of a vacancy for a minister, and that the people were waiting for me to occupy it. The congregation was numerous; a larger salary was offered than any I knew of in that part of the country; and I was informed that the rulers of the college had been consulted on the occasion.

Here, if I complied with my sense of duty, I must "take up the cross," and turn out naked into the world, for I had very little property of my own, none to expect from my father, and no salary to support me. Many would regard me as the off-scouring of all things, fit for nothing.

I labored under a lively sense of all these difficulties. Poverty and disgrace stared me in the face; and, as I had none but the Lord to whom I could make known my distress and discouragements; nor any other of whom to ask counsel; I cried to him incessantly for wisdom, strength and fortitude; that I might be favored with a clear discovery of my duty, and enabled faithfully to obey him in all things.

At this time, my trials and difficulties were so numerous, that I was ready to conclude with Job, that I should "die in my nest." I feared I should never be able to resign all my interest, honor and credit in the world; submit to a state of poverty; and incur the disgrace of a reputed heretic! These difficulties were presented to my

view, and magnified to the highest degree that any one can imagine. In the height of my distress I entered my closet or study, and thus poured out my complaint before the Lord: "O Lord! I know not what to do, in this day of deep distress and anxiety of soul. I am not sufficiently clear respecting my duty in the undertaking and execution of an affair of so much importance. All that I have in this world that is valuable, and my everlasting happiness also, is now at stake."

My present situation appeared so important, that if I mistook my course, and took a wrong direction, all might be lost forever. If I should be led by a spirit of error and confusion, I might offend my Maker and my fellow-creatures; forever remain in a dark wilderness; and never be restored to favor with God or good men.

Darkness prevailed over me so far at that time, that I seemed to be placed in the situation of John the Baptist, when he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Christ, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" —I was almost ready to despair, and to conclude that I was altogether wrong in proposing to take a step so contrary to reason, as this now appeared to be. Thus I poured forth my complaint, and mourned before the Lord. I had none to depend upon but him, nor any other of whom to ask counsel in my distressed circumstances. My dependance was wholly on him for wisdom and direction, in this trying and afflicting situation.

It is difficult to conceive, and not in my power to express, the anxiety of my mind in this proving season; for every thing valuable seemed in danger of being totally lost. Nevertheless, I cried to the Lord for help; and covenanted with him, that if he would be pleased to direct me in the way which would be safe for me to pursue, manifest his will therein, and afford me assistance to perform my duties, I would resign all to his disposal; obey his will; no longer reason with flesh and blood; but trust to his providence for support and credit in the world; and for everything else he might deem best and most convenient

for me. For I was now clearly convinced, that if I did not resign everything, when it was evidently manifested to be my duty, I had nothing to expect but death, as to my spiritual condition.

Whilst I was thus bemoaning my condition before the Lord; waiting upon him for direction, with ardent prayers for his assistance and wisdom to guide me in the right way, he was graciously pleased to show me that he was about to bring the church out of the wilderness, or wandering state in which she had long been destitute of the true leader. And he made it clearly known to me that it was his will I should go forth, and be an instrument in his hand for the accomplishment of this design.

As soon as I was satisfied on these points, I reasoned not with flesh and blood, but immediately gave up to the heavenly vision. I then went to the chief ruler of the college, and obtained his permission to go home; but I told no one my reasons for this procedure.

This was a trying time. I was about to take an important step. Like Gideon, I was desirous to "turn the fleece;" to wait in retirement for wisdom, maturely to consider this weighty undertaking, which now pressed heavily on my mind. After staying at home about three weeks, the will of my divine Master, relating to my removal from college, was satisfactorily manifested. Without making known my purpose, I returned to the college and settled my affairs, in order to leave it. Whilst I was preparing to depart, a report was spread among the scholars that I was turned Quaker, and was going to leave them. Yet I did not hear that any of them uttered a hard or railing word against me. The rector, Elisha Williams, took an opportunity to converse with me. He was very moderate, but said he was sorry for my conclusion; that, heretofore, he had entertained a good opinion of me, and an expectation that I would be useful in my day; but now his hopes were in great measure frustrated. We had much conversation on the subject; he signified he did not give me up for lost. He *appeared serious*, and we parted good friends.

As the time for my departure drew near, being wholly resigned to the Lord's will, the cloud was removed from my tabernacle; my sight was clear; my courage returned; and the mountains, whose tops so lately appeared to reach the clouds, where all laid as level as a plain; the sea was driven back; so that there was nothing to interrupt my passage. I went over all, as on dry land, and not a dog was suffered to move a tongue against me. Then was my soul filled with living praise; thanksgiving and rejoicing in the Lord; who had triumphed gloriously. He was my strength, my song, and my salvation. The deeps covered my enemies; they sank to the bottom as a stone. The right hand of the Lord was glorious in power; and I sang his praises; for he was worthy; having done great things for me.

Before I left college I told the rector of my intentions, and that I did not know that I should return; but if I should change my mind, and wish to take a degree, if it would be permitted, perhaps I might come back for that purpose: if I should conclude not to return, I would write to him and give him my reasons for such conclusion. He replied, and told me I should be welcome to a degree; and that it would give them pleasure to grant me one.

While I was preparing for my journey, my class-mate, before mentioned, being desirous to ride one day with me, obtained permission. The rector told him, that I might, perhaps, instil bad principles into him, and lead him astray. To which my friend replied, "I have lived a great part of the time since I came to the college with him, and I believe he has done me no harm; but contrariwise." Then, having bidden them all farewell, we departed.

I thought it a favor that one of my fellows who was in good credit, and esteemed none of the least in the college, should be willing so far to take up the cross, as to accompany me, who was deemed a heretic, a Quaker, or they knew not what; but feeling a degree of love for

me, it made him fearless of shame or any disgrace that might ensue.

As we rode along, we discussed all the doctrines which we had formerly debated; and he appeared almost as much convinced of the truth of my sentiments as I was. Near night, when we were about to separate, he said, "Ferris, I believe you are right in leaving the college. I believe your principles are sound and good; but I do not see, at present, that I am called to do as you have done. If, at any time hereafter, I should see it to be my duty to follow your example, I purpose to have no will of my own; but submit and obey the will of my Master." We bade each other farewell, and I saw him no more; but I afterwards heard that to follow my example was a cross too heavy for him to bear. He took to preaching for a living among the Presbyterians; and never left them to my knowledge.

After I had parted with my companion, I went on to New-Milford, where my parents and relations resided. About three weeks afterwards, I went to a Yearly Meeting of the people called Quakers, on Long-Island; in order to discover whether they were a *living* people or not; for a living people I wished to find. I had thought for several years before that there ought to be such a people; a people who had life in them, and abounded in love to each other, as did the primitive Christians; a people who knew they had passed from death unto life, by their love to the brethren. Here I gathered strength, and was more confirmed that I was right in leaving the college; for I found a living, humble, heavenly minded people; full of love and good works; such a one as I had never seen before. I rejoiced to find *that* which I had been seeking; and soon owned them to be the Lord's people; the true church of Christ; according to his own description of it; where he says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." I also found they held and believed the same doctrines, the truth of which had been manifested to me immediately

by the Holy Spirit. Being the same that Robert Barclay had laid down and well defended in his Apology. Before I had read this work, I did not know there was a people on earth who believed and lived in the truth, as described by Barclay; but here I found a numerous society who held the same truths, and lived an humble, self-denying life; becoming the character of Christians. I was indubitably satisfied that their worship was in spirit and in truth; and they such worshipers as the Father sought and owned. I was convinced, beyond a doubt, that they preached the gospel in the demonstration of the spirit; and divine authority was felt to attend their ministry. They were not like the scribes, to whom I had been listening all my life; who had neither commission nor authority, except that which was received from man; being such as the Lord never sent; and therefore could not profit the people they professed to teach. I now clearly saw the difference between man-made ministers, and those whom the Lord qualifies and sends into his harvest field; the difference between the wheat and the chaff; and it was marvellous to me, to reflect how long I had sat under a formal, dry and lifeless ministry.

At the meeting before mentioned, there were several eminent ministers from Europe, both male and female. I there heard women preach the gospel, in the divine authority of Truth; far exceeding all the learned rabbies I had known. This was not so strange to me as it might have been to others; for I had before seen, by the immediate manifestation of grace and truth, that women, as well as men, might be clothed with gospel power; and that daughters as well as sons, under the gospel dispensation, were to have the spirit poured upon them, that they might prophecy; and though I had never before heard a woman preach, yet I now rejoiced to see the prophecy fulfilled.

After I returned home from the yearly meeting, I wrote a letter to the Rector of the college, informing him that I had determined not to return; and that I could not, with

freedom, take any authority that man could give. I also informed him, that since I left them, I had heard women preach the gospel far better than any learned man I had ever heard.

Having now left the college, and separated myself from the people with whom I had been educated, I saw great cause of thankfulness to the Author of all good, who had revealed to me the errors of my youth, and the falsity of the doctrines imbibed in my education; who had made known to me his truth and people, so that I had no doubts remaining. It now became my principle concern that I might be enabled to walk in the truth, and witness the Holy Spirit to lead me on my way.

In this state I admired the boundless goodness, the infinite kindness and tender mercy of a gracious God, in effecting my late deliverance; especially when I considered how tempestuous were the seas, and how the billows rolled over me; how the mountains of opposition raised their lofty heads to stop my passage; and again, in a short time, how the winds and seas were hushed and still; and how the mountains became a perfect plain! I truly found as great cause to sing upon the banks of deliverance, as Israel did of old, when they had passed through the sea on dry ground, and had turned about and seen their enemies dead on the shore. I rejoiced in the Lord and sang praises to Him, who for me had done marvellous things; who had made me acquainted with his blessed Truth, and at length gave me ability to trample the world, and all its riches, honors and pleasures, under my feet; to submit to the cross of Christ, and be willing to be accounted a fool of all men. For which favors I felt myself under great obligations to my gracious Benefactor.

I will now return to a former part of my narrative, and give some account of my reception by my relatives. After I had parted with my class-mate, on my way home from college, I heard that my father had received intelligence of my intentions, and was much dissatisfied with my proceedings, saying, "If the accounts I have heard be true,

I desire he may never come to my house again." Being thus informed, I went to my brother's. After some days I went to see my father. He would not speak to me; but turned and passed away without taking notice of me. In a few days afterwards I went a second time; but he still refused to speak to me. After a few days I went the third time, and met him at the door, and asked after his health, at the same time pulling off my hat, (for at that time I was not convinced of the necessity of bearing a testimony against hat-honor;) he replied, he was not very well, and passed away. I then went into the house, and my father returning, we sat down and entered into conversation. He said he had heard I had left the college and turned Quaker. In reply, I told him it had been my endeavor, for some years past, to follow my divine Leader, and that I still endeavored to attend to the same Guide, and follow whithersoever he might lead me; that I apprehended he had led me to leave the college, and forsake the way of my education; and it was possible that the same Guide might some time lead me to join the people called Quakers; but that, as yet, I knew but little of them. After some time spent in conversation of this kind, my father queried what need there was to forsake the way of my education; "for," said he, "the Lord has favored you, and been with you in the Presbyterian way; so that if you continue to fear and serve him in that way, you may do well, and will, no doubt, end in peace." I answered, it was true I had been much favored under my former profession; the Lord had been near me, and his living presence with me. He had led and guided me by his good Spirit, and had revealed his will to me far beyond any thing I had deserved, or could have expected; and I still desired to follow that Teacher who had never led me astray, but had brought me, step by step, from one degree of experience to another, until I was obliged to leave the college, and bear a testimony against the formal profession I had made; and thus he had led me to the present time.

Thus we conversed for some hours; my father raising objections to the Quakers, and my joining with them. But, through divine assistance, (with which I think I was favored,) I was enabled fully to answer all his objections, so that he was willing to leave the subject, and became moderate, and apparently more easy in his mind. From that time, during the remainder of his life, although he had many opportunities, he never entered into any arguments with me on religious subjects, but was always kind and affectionate. I thought he concluded I might do well in the way he found me, and so remained satisfied.

After I had been some time at home, new objections arose in my mind against a compliance with the customs of those among whom I resided; such as bowing and scraping; putting off the hat; saying, "your servant, sir, madam," &c., and against using the ungrammatical, corrupt language of "you" to a single person. Although, in past years, I had known various exercises, and thought I had learned many hard lessons, yet I found much in me that required mortification, and that I yet had many things to learn. To refuse the use of the plural language to a single person, although it seemed a small matter, yet I found it hard to submit to it. I was convinced that the common mode of speaking in the plural number to a single person, was a violation of the rules of grammar, and unscriptural. I also believed the pride of man had introduced the custom, yet I thought it was not necessary to make myself ridiculous to all about me for a matter of so small importance. So long, therefore, as no necessity was laid upon me to take up the cross in that respect, I continued to use the language of my education. Yet I used compliments sparingly, because the disuse of them was not so observable. However, it was not long before I found it my duty to say "thee" and "thou" to every individual. Nevertheless, I found an inclination or temptation so to turn the conversation as to shun this mode of speech; yet this did not afford peace. Small as

the matter appeared, I could not be easy without being entirely faithful in every respect; and my duty in this particular being clearly manifested, I reasoned no longer with flesh and blood, but submitted to the requiring. It was a rule with me to do nothing of this kind by imitation; but, when any thing was required of me, to submit; and thus I obtained peace.

About this time, several scholars coming from the college, invited me to accompany them on a visit to the minister in our settlement; and accordingly I went with them. We walked with our hats under our arms, and so entered the house. Just as we were about to depart, I was required to bear a testimony against the hat-honor. So I rose put on my hat, went to the priest, and bade him farewell, without putting my hand to it or bowing my body. This being the first time I had refused these compliments, it was a close trial; and it appeared remarkable that it should be required of me at such a time and in such a company; but neither the priest nor my companions took notice of it, so as to make any remark. My obedience afforded me great peace; and by yielding to these inward motions of the sure Guide in small things, I gained strength, and was more and more confirmed that I was right in making such a change.

I now began to lay aside some of the superfluities of my dress, and to appear like a Quaker; believing it was required of me not to hide myself in any respect, but boldly to bear a testimony to the truth, so far as it was clearly manifested to me. I did not then wonder that people admired at our folly (as they think it to be) in making ourselves a laughing-stock and by-word, by our singularities; because, so it appeared to me but a short time before I was obliged to submit to it. I loved the honor and esteem of men as well as others, and would have enjoyed it, if I could have had it with peace of mind; but that is not allowed in the school of Christ, where nothing will do without self-denial and taking up the daily cross; and if, on our part, there be a full sub-

mission in every respect, I can say from experience, that our peace will flow as a river.

Having left the college without taking a degree, it was probable I should have no salary to depend on for subsistence. I had disobliged my father, and of course had nothing to expect from him, and I had but little of my own to support me. And now, being come to the twenty-fifth year of my age, I began to think it necessary to use some endeavors to obtain a livelihood. I had for several years before this period thought I should go to reside in Pennsylvania; and this prospect now opened so clearly, that I was inclined to believe it was my duty to go there. I according made ready and went, in company with three ministering friends from Europe, then on a religious visit to America. We arrived in Philadelphia about the middle of the Sixth month, 1733.

Here ends that part of my narrative which was written in my youth in the Latin language.

As I observed before, I arrived in Philadelphia in 1733. I concluded that if I could establish myself in business that would be likely to answer, I would, for some time, make the city my residence. After the Yearly Meeting was over, and I had become a little acquainted with Friends, and known among them, I proposed to open a school, to teach the Latin and Greek languages. But, as I was a stranger, and those children that were intended to be taught these languages were mostly entered in other schools, I was doubtful whether I should be able to get a sufficient number of such scholars. I therefore agreed to teach English also; and, in time, I had a school, of both sexes, sufficiently large for my support.

Being a stranger, I consequently met with trials and difficulties. For a while my school was small and not likely to support me; but I endeavored to be resigned, and repose with confidence in an all-sufficient Providence, from whom I had often received help in times of great trial. My difficulties were increased by the low state of my funds. The weather was now beginning to grow

cold. It was customary for the teacher to find wood for fuel, and for the scholars to pay a proportion of the expense when they paid for their quarter's tuition; and as I had but few scholars, and no money yet due, and not two shillings of my own remaining, I was very thoughtful how to procure wood. No one knew the state of my purse, nor did I desire to make it known; and this I should do if I attempted to borrow. I therefore omitted to buy as long as I well could. I did not like to ask for credit, and if I did, it was doubtful whether I should obtain it; so that I was closely tried. But, while I was under this exercise, the weather was more moderate than usual at that season. After I had been sufficiently tried, to prove my faith and confidence in divine Providence, a Friend came into my school and privately gave me twenty shillings,* which, he said, had been sent by a Friend, who did not wish to be known as the donor. For this unexpected favor I was thankful to the Lord, whose mercies endure forever. Having now the means, I soon purchased some wood; and the weather, in a short time, becoming colder, I had a renewed sense of the kindness of Providence, who had so seasonably relieved me. But afterwards, when my stock of wood was nearly exhausted, I was brought into the same difficulty and trial as before, and as much needed a renewal of my faith. I strove to be quiet, and to have my dependence placed on Him who fed a great multitude with a few loaves and little fishes; and just as I began to suffer, another twenty shilling bill was privately presented to me by an unknown hand; but I received it as coming from the Lord, who knew all my difficulties.

Thus was I again relieved; and never, afterwards, received anything more in this way; nor did I ever need it; as I was sufficiently supplied by the proceeds of my business. This was a confirmation to me, that I had been

* Twenty shillings, in 1733, would probably be equally valuable with ten dollars in 1825.

assisted by a watchful Providence, who knows all states and conditions, both internal and external; and is able and willing to turn the hearts of his people, and constrain them to help the needy; as, formerly, he sent the ravens to feed the prophet.

I have made these few remarks for the sake of those who may be in similar circumstances, and stand in need of faith and confidence in the care of divine Providence, over his dependent people; desiring they may afford them encouragement to put their trust wholly in the Lord, and not faint in the day of inward or outward trials.

After I had been about six months in Philadelphia, I requested to be taken into membership with Friends; and was, accordingly, received. Some time after I had joined the Society, I began to think of settling myself, and to marry, when the way should appear without obstruction; which was not then the case. I considered *marriage* to be the most important concern in this life. "Marriage," said the apostle, "is honorable in all." I concluded he meant that it was *honorable* to all who married from pure motives, to the right person, and in the proper way and time, as divine Providence should direct. I believed it best for most men to marry; and that there was, for each man, one woman that would suit him better than any other. It appears to me essential that all men should *seek for wisdom, and wait for it*, to guide them in this important undertaking; because, no man, without divine assistance, is able to discover who is the right person for him to marry; but the Creator of both can and will direct him. And why, in such an important concern, should we not seek for counsel, as well as in matters of minor consequence? There is, moreover, greater danger of erring in this than in some other concerns, from our being too impatient to wait for the pointings of divine Wisdom; lest by so doing, we might lose some supposed benefit. It is common for young people to think and say, "I would not marry such a person; for certain reasons: such as the want of beauty, wit, edu-

cation," &c.; and to affirm that they could not love such a one; but we may err by an over-hasty conclusion, as well as by any other neglect of our true Guide.

I now propose to give some hints of my own proceedings in this concern. Near the place of my residence there lived a comely young woman, of a good, reputable family; educated in plainness; favored with good natural talents; and in good circumstances. Every view of the case was favorable to my wishes.

By some hints I had received, it appeared probable that my addresses would be agreeable to her; and some of my best friends urged the attempt. From inattention to my heavenly Guide, I took the hint from man; and following my own inclination, I moved without asking my divine Master's advice. I went to spend an evening with the young woman, if I should find it agreeable when there. She and her mother were sitting together; and no other person present. They received me in a friendly manner; but I think I had not chatted with them more than half an hour, before I heard something, like a still small voice, saying to me, "Seekest thou great things for thyself?—seek them not." This language pierced me like a sword to the heart. It so filled me with confusion, that I was unfit for any further conversation. I endeavored to conceal my disorder; but soon took my leave, without opening, to either the mother or her daughter, the subject which had led me to visit them. And I, afterwards, had substantial reason to think it was well for me that I had failed in this enterprise.

I was so confused and benumbed by this adventure, that I did not recover my usual state for several months; though I could not suddenly see that my error was acting without permission; but began to suppose that I should never be suffered to marry; and should have to pass my life without a companion, or a home. I endeavored to be resigned to this view; supposing it was the Lord's will; but, for several months, it was a severe trial. At length I was brought to submit, and say "Amen."

This simple account of my visit to this young woman, is designed as a warning to others: that they may shun the snare into which I was so near falling.

I shall now relate another of my movements, with respect to marriage, which I believe was a right one; as it terminated to lasting satisfaction. It may appear strange to some; as if I married in the cross; and, I suppose, few will be inclined to follow my example. Yet, if the divine Teacher of truth and righteousness be attended to, it may be the lot of some. After I had been much mortified and humbled, under a sense of my former misstep, I went, one day, to a Friend's house to dine. As I sat at the table, I observed a young woman sitting opposite to me, whom I did not remember ever to have seen before. My attention, at that time, being otherwise engaged, I took very little notice of her; but a language very quietly, and very pleasantly, passed through my mind, on this wise, "If thou wilt marry that young woman, thou shalt be happy with her." There was such a degree of divine virtue attending the intimation, that it removed all doubt concerning its origin and Author. I took a view of her, and thought she was a goodly person; but, as we moved from the table, I perceived she was lame. The cause of her lameness I knew not; but was displeased that I should have a cripple allotted to me. It was clear to me, beyond all doubt, that the language I had heard was from heaven; but I presumptuously thought I would rather choose for myself. The next day the subject was calmly presented to my mind, like a query, "Why should thou despise her for her lameness? it may be no fault of hers. Thou art favored with sound limbs, and a capacity for active exertion; and would it not be kind and benevolent in thee, to bear a part of her infirmity, and to sympathize with her? She may be affectionate and kind to thee; and thou shalt be happy in a compliance with thy duty." Notwithstanding all this, I continued to reason against these convictions; alleging that it was more than I could bear. The enemy of my

happiness was busily engaged, in raising arguments against a compliance with my duty, suggesting that it was an unreasonable thing that I should be united to a lame wife; and that every one who knew me, would admire at my folly.* Thus, from day to day, and week to week, I reasoned against it; until, at length, my kind Benefactor, in a loving and benevolent manner, opened to my view, that, if I were left to choose for myself, and to take a wife to please my fancy, she might be an affliction to me all the days of my life; and lead me astray, so as to endanger my future happiness. Or she might fall into vicious practices; notwithstanding that, at the time of her marriage, she might be apparently virtuous; it was, therefore, unsafe to trust to my natural understanding. On the other hand, here was a companion prepared for me by unerring Wisdom; so that I might rely with safety on the choice. Still I was unwilling to submit. But heavenly kindness followed me, in order to convince me that it would be best to comply, and no longer resist the truth. At length it pleased the Lord, once more, clearly to show me that if I would submit, it should not only tend to my own happiness, but that a blessing should rest on my posterity. This was so great a favor, and manifested so much divine regard, that I no longer resisted; but concluded to pay the young woman a visit, and open the subject for consideration; but, after I had laid my proposition before her, I still had hopes that I might be excused; and only visited her occasionally. During this time, for several months, I endured great trials and afflictions, before I was fully resigned. But, after divine Goodness had prevailed over my rebellious nature, all things relating to my marriage wore a pleasant aspect. The young woman appeared beautiful; and I was prepared to receive her as a gift from heaven; fully as good

* The author's person was rather uncommonly good, and it is probable he might have thought too highly of personal excellence.

as I deserved. We waited about six months for my parents' consent, from New England, (a conveyance by letter being at that time difficult to obtain,) and accomplished our marriage on the thirteenth of the Ninth month, 1735, in the city of Philadelphia.

It is now forty years since we married; and I can truly say, that I never repented it; but have always regarded our union as a proof of divine kindness. I am fully sensible there was no woman on earth so suitable for me as she was. And all those things which were shown me, as the consequence of my submission, are punctually fulfilled. A blessing has rested on me and on my posterity. I have lived to see my children, arrived to years of understanding, favored with a knowledge of the Truth; (which is the greatest of all blessings;) and some of them, beyond all doubt, are landed in eternal felicity. I have been blessed with plenty; and, above all, with peace. I am, therefore, satisfied and thankful to my gracious Benefactor, for his kindness to me in this concern; as well as for all his other favors; who am not deserving of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which he has shown to his unworthy servant.

I have given this relation, so circumstantially, with a view to show how incapable we are to see things in their true light, until we are truly humbled, and brought into subjection to the divine will; and how unsafe it is for poor, frail, short-sighted creatures, to reject so safe a counsellor, and trust to their own wisdom, in concerns of such importance. Therefore, let all seek that "Wisdom that cometh from above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated."

Whilst I was proceeding in my concerns relating to marriage, I was also thoughtful concerning the proper place to reside; and the business I should engage in for support. I had now kept a school nearly four years; and had partly concluded to resign that employment, on account of the confinement necessarily attending it; and having heard of a new settlement, then making in the

county of New-Castle, (since called Wilmington,) I was inclined to see it, and thought, if it pleased me, I might perhaps, settle there. It had been a subject of frequent consideration; but when I mentioned it to my wife, she appeared unwilling to leave Philadelphia, as she had lived there nearly all her life, and her relations resided in that city. But William Shipley and his wife, from Springfield, in Chester county, proposing in a short time, to settle in Wilmington, I went with them to see the place. It pleased me so well that I rented a lot of ground there; and, on my return, told my wife what I had done. She thought we would never make use of it.

In those days, by various trials, exercises, and afflictions, I was reduced to a very low state. My natural powers seemed to be so much weakened, that I could not judge what course to take, or how to proceed, in my temporal concerns, as I had formerly done; or as others could do; so that I saw no way for me to move, with prudence or safety, without immediate direction from the fountain of Wisdom. And, I may say, with humility of heart, and thankfulness to the God of all mercies, as I sought for it, and waited for direction, I sought him not in vain. I waited upon him; not daring to move until he appeared to point out the way; and he failed not to show me what step I should take, and when to take it, in a wonderful manner. It was marvellous in my eyes; that a poor worm should be thus favored; and I should not venture to mention how particularly I was led, if I did not believe it to be my duty.

Observing how ignorant and thoughtless mankind are, in general, of a divine instructor, especially in their temporal concerns, supposing themselves sufficient to manage the affairs of this life, they do not expect or seek for superior intelligence, I feel anxious for an amendment, where we are out of the true order; and shall now give some hints of my own experience in relation to this subject.

As before mentioned, I had taken a lot of ground in Wilmington; but as yet it was not clear to me that it

would be best for us to reside there; and my wife seeming unwilling to think of it, great were the trials that attended my mind.

To move from one place to another, in our own time and will, I believe is a matter of serious consequence. A change of residence appears to me next in importance to marriage; and, therefore, requires the same Divine wisdom to direct us aright. We may be qualified for service in one place; and, by removing, to a distance, unless we are directed by unerring counsel, the designs of Providence respecting us, may be frustrated; and our usefulness lessened.

Under these considerations I was reduced very low in mind: being sensible of my own inability rightly to direct my course. I was full of cares and fears; and so humbled that I was willing to be or do anything that was pleasing to my dear Master; so that I might be favored with a knowledge of his will; even if it were to take my axe or spade and labor for the support of my small family. Sometimes it appeared best to move, and again the prospect seemed dark and cloudy. After some months spent in anxious solicitude on this subject, light gradually arose on my mind, and at length, the prospect of removing to the new settlement of which I have spoken, and of keeping a store for the sale of goods there, appeared so clear, that I applied for a house convenient for this purpose, if I should conclude to remove. Yet, although I had proceeded so far, I was under a daily care lest I should be mistaken, and take a wrong step; so as to bring a reproach on the profession of Truth I had made to the world.

While I was under this concern, I was taken ill with the small-pox; and had it pretty severely. When on the recovery, as I sat by the fire one evening, in company with my wife, I received a letter from the owner of the house, of which I had the refusal. He informed me that I must write to him the next morning, and say whether *I would take it* or not; as another person had deter-

mined to take possession of it. There was no other house in the settlement which would be at all suitable for my intended business. This brought me into a close trial. After I had read the letter to my wife, we sat silent for some time. At length she cheerfully said, "Well, let us go." Which I rejoiced to hear; although at that time, the prospect was enveloped in darkness. I made her but little reply; and being weak in body, and dark in mind, I retired to bed. After I had lain some some time, revolving the difficulties of my situation, with fervent desires for divine direction, I went to sleep; and had a good night's rest; which I had not enjoyed before, during that illness. About the dawn of the day, it seemed as if I heard a clear and intelligible language, saying to me, "Go and prosper; fear not; the cattle on a thousand hills are mine; and I give them to whom I please. Behold! I will be with thee." Immediately all my doubts vanished; I saw, with sufficient clearness, that I might go with safety; and hope for a competent subsistence. These circumstances I related to my wife; and told her of my prospects; which afforded her encouragement. I then arose, and wrote to the owner of the house; informing him that I had concluded to take it; and that I hoped to move at the time proposed. Accordingly I removed to it, with my family, in the Third month, 1737; taking with me some goods for my store.

After our removal, the minds of the people, both in town and country, were inclined to deal with us; and we soon sold the few goods we brought from the city. I then had occasion to think of "the cattle on a thousand hills," with heartfelt gratitude to Him who keepeth covenant with his children, and whose mercies fail not. He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth; but his watchful eye regardeth his depending people, as I have ever found.

I will now give some of my views on the subject of business, lawful for Christians to engage in. Children may be apprenticed to trades which are inconsistent with a Christian profession. For instance, some are taught to

make instruments of war; which they who believe in the peaceable doctrines of Christ cannot lawfully engage in. There are several other callings which I believe Christians cannot consistently follow.

It is the duty of those who profess to follow Christ the light of the world, to consider whether the business in which they engage, is agreeable to his will; and, if a doubt arise respecting its propriety, to ask counsel, and wait for wisdom, to know how to proceed. I was educated under a supposition that human learning was sufficient to qualify me to teach people the way to peace and happiness. This was clearly revealed to me to be a mistake; and I had not the shadow of a doubt, that they who acquired human learning, to qualify them for the gospel ministry, were entirely wrong. In consequence of this conviction, I employed myself in teaching a school; which I believe was right for me at that time. And when I purposed to enter into another business, being convinced that I ought to ask counsel of the great Counsellor, I did not run in my own will, and choose my own ways. I was satisfied, that, as we were blessed with a divine Teacher, it was our duty to follow his directions, in temporal, as well as spiritual concerns; especially in movements of importance. And when I believed it would be right to keep a store, I was desirous that I might proceed in the business under the direction of Him who seemed willing to teach me. Not having served an apprenticeship to the mercantile business, I was ignorant of the quality and prices of goods; it was, therefore, probable I should be under some difficulty in these respects.

My mind, as I before observed, was reduced to a very low state, so that I felt incapable of conducting my outward concerns advantageously, unless by divine aid, as the way opened in the light. Our little stock of goods being nearly all sold, my wife reminded me of our need of a fresh supply. I felt no freedom at that time to procure any, though I did not tell her the cause of my delay, only saying I expected soon to go to Philadelphia, *where we purchased* our goods. As I humbly waited for

wisdom the never failing fountain was opened. Before I rose one morning it appeared clear to me, that I might proceed in the business, of which I informed my wife. She was pleased to hear it, knowing the necessity we were under, but admired that I was so tardy in making up my mind to go. Being unacquainted with the merchants, and ignorant of the quality of goods, I felt my need of an instructor, to whom I might safely apply for direction; and as I looked to my divine Guide, I found to my admiration that He was near to help me. When I went into a store to make my purchases, I continued to lay off such goods as I thought we wanted, until the way seemed to close at that place, and I felt an openness to proceed to another. I went accordingly, and acted in the same manner, as long as I found freedom; and when the way to go further was wholly closed, I gathered my purchases together, and returned home. Thus I went on from time to time, and from year to year.

Sometimes when my wife would look over the goods I had purchased, she would express a regret that I bought certain articles, which she specified; fearing that they might not be saleable. I thought otherwise, and we frequently found them to sell as well as anything I had bought. When I kept near to my divine Director, either in my spiritual or temporal concerns, everything prospered under my hand. I was brought so low that I could really do nothing in either case, to any advantage, without Him.

The advantages arising from a faithful attention to the leadings of the Holy Spirit are very great, far greater than my tongue or pen can express; even in the management of our temporal affairs. And, I believe, all real Christians might have their understandings enlightened, and their eyes anointed, clearly to see how to proceed in all concerns of importance, provided the pure fear of the Lord prevailed in their hearts; and an humble dependence and full confidence in the all-sufficient Helper were steadily maintained. *I speak from* experience. He has been my in-

structor in a very particular manner; much more so than I have mentioned, or than I can describe; and I am far from supposing that I have been more deserving than others. Christ said, "Ask and ye shall receive." I asked for his direction and assistance, and he helped me, and I found the promise true.

I believe it is consistent with the divine Will, that all should have their hope and dependence more fully placed in his almighty power; and that they should wait for instruction from him, in all their undertakings. Thus, their understandings would be enlarged; their ideas would be clear; and, having submitted all to the disposal of divine Providence, who had directed their proceedings, they would go forward without any anxious cares, or distracting thoughts, respecting events. I know this to my comfort. So far as I have conformed to this view, a blessing has attended my undertakings, besides the blessings of peace and an easy mind.

But, before I leave this subject, I will observe, that I did not always so closely attend to my blessed Instructor as I ought to have done: of which I will relate some instances. It was the practice of shop-keepers to sell rum; and I was told that if I did not conform to it, I need not expect to do any business of importance. So, without waiting for direction, I fell into the practice; and followed it for several years; until it became a subject of uneasiness to me. I found many used that article to the injury, both of body and mind. Some spent their estates to procure it; and thus brought themselves and their families into want and distress; which gave me trouble of mind. But, being unwilling to lose the profits of this branch of business, I adopted an expedient to soothe my pain; which was, to refuse selling it to such as I thought would make an evil use of it. But this did not answer my expectations; for they would send for it by those who were not suspected. At length I was made to relinquish the profits made on this article; and trust to Providence for the result. I ceased to

sell it; which afforded me peace, and made no great diminution of my business.*

It was also customary, in those days, for Friends, as well as others, to sell many superfluous articles; such as gay calicoes; flowered ribbands; and other fine things; which we, as a society, did not allow our families to wear; and which it was not consistent with our profession to encourage in others. With these views, I endeavored to lay aside all such superfluities, and to deal in such articles only, as were really useful.† I was told that if I refused to sell such goods, I might quit my business; but, as I did it from a sense of duty, I was not sensible that I sustained any loss by it.

After I had been in business several years, and had increased in wealth, three or four of my fellow townsmen concluded to build a vessel and trade to the West Indies; and, without consulting my kind Instructor, I was prevailed upon to join them, and continued in the trade for some time; but being favored to see my error, I withdrew from the concern as soon as possible, and confined myself to the business of my store. As I attended to this business, I found I could not feel easy to sell my goods for as much as I could get for them, as was the practice with many; but by selling them at a moderate profit I obtained peace of mind.

I am aware that many, and even some who make a high profession of religion, will deem my remarks on business, marriage, &c., unworthy of notice; and be ready to smile at them, as the whims and notions of a distempered and enthusiastic brain, because they may have had no such experience. Yet there may be others who, having had some knowledge of this way, will be glad of these

* In 1742 by following his DIVINE GUIDE, the author of this very interesting narrative took a ground, in relation to the sale of *distilled spirituous liquors*, which placed him in advance of public sentiment *one hundred years!*

† The consistency of his practice in these cases, will be admitted by many who are not yet willing to follow his example.

remarks; for I am sure, beyond all doubt, that what I have written is true, and well worthy of attention.* And if men were universally to attend to the direction of Him who is come to lead us into all truth, the wars and devastations now prevailing in our land would not have existed.†

I will now recur to the time when I first joined the Society of Friends. After I was admitted into membership, I diligently attended all our meetings for worship and discipline; and greatly admired the beautiful order established in the society, and the living gospel ministry with which we were favored. After I had been a member about one year, I was concerned to appear in the ministry, and excite the careless to a consideration of their "latter end." I had passed through many vicissitudes and tribulations; but when this concern was laid upon me, it seemed heavier than any thing I had ever had to bear. I thought I could never be resigned to it. When I was called out of the vanities of my youth, and was obliged to submit to the cross of Christ, to become a laughing-stock and a by-word to my companions and acquaintances, I was so humbled, so mortified, and *self* so much abased, I thought I could submit to any thing that might afterwards be required of me. Again, when I passed through that great trial of leaving college, in the manner before related, and had to deny all the honors, friendships, pleasant connections, and riches of the world, I concluded I should never again meet with so great a trial. But I was mistaken. This far exceeded all I had previously encountered. I, however, submitted so far as to speak a few times in our meetings; and then, through

* When we consider the superficial state of most religious professors, it is no marvel they should reject the doctrine of *spiritual direction* in *secular* concerns; although it will generally be granted that our *spiritual welfare* is clearly connected with the state of our *domestic* and other *temporal* affairs. It was the promise of our Lord to his followers, "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will *guide you into all truth*"—John xvi. 13.

† The Revolutionary war.

great fear that I should not be able to persevere, I was induced to be silent, and postpone the performance of this duty until a more "convenient season," or more full manifestation of the divine will. I concluded, that if I should continue for any considerable time to appear as a minister, and afterwards should be silent, it would bring greater dishonor on my profession than thus to cease at an early period of such a concern. Sometimes I hoped that at a future meeting the trial would not be so severe; at others, that more strength would be granted me. Thus I reasoned, from month to month and year to year, during seven years. In all which time the concern was often so heavy, that I sat and trembled through the time of meeting, and then went away full of sorrow, trouble and pain of heart.

For several years after this I seldom felt this concern; yet I was still sensible that I had a work of this kind to do, and felt great pain in neglecting it. I saw no way to obtain peace of mind but by a submission to the cross, and becoming willing to be accounted a fool; and this being a severe trial, I evaded it. Sometimes I had a faint hope that I should yet obtain strength to proceed in the work, at other times I was almost in despair.

Thus I passed along for fifteen years; during which time my error was manifested to me in various ways. Sometimes by the Holy Spirit, showing me that "obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken to the voice of the Lord, than the fat of rams." Sometimes by the ministry of his messengers; and sometimes by dreams, &c. Thus, in great mercy, the Lord followed me as he did Ephraim of old, saying, "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?"

One night I dreamed that I saw a large, spacious building, in an unfinished state; and the master builder, who appeared an excellent person, came to me as I stood at a distance, and desired me to go and take a view of it; to which I agreed; and as we were surveying it, and examining the particular parts, I observed that among the

many pillars, erected for the support of the building, there was one lacking. I queried of him, what was the cause of that vacancy. He replied, it was left for me; and that I was specially designed and prepared for the place, and showed me how I fitted it, like a mortise is fitted to its tenon. So that I saw in my dream that all he said was true. But, notwithstanding all this, I objected to my capacity and fitness to fill the vacancy, and was therefore unwilling to occupy it. He endeavored, by the most convincing reasons, to remove all my objections, and to demonstrate that I was fitted for the place. He further told me that they had not another prepared for it; and that the building would be retarded if I did not comply with the design. After he had reasoned with me a long time, and I still refused, he appeared to be grieved, and told me it was a great pity that I should be rendered useless in the house by my own obstinacy; and then added, "But it must not be so; for if thou wilt not be a pillar, thou shalt be a plank for the floor." He then showed me how I might be flatted and prepared for that purpose. But I refused that place also, on the ground that it looked too diminutive to be a plank to be trod upon by all who came into the house. At this the master was troubled, seeing I would accept no place that was offered me; but, after a long debate, he concluded to leave the propositions he had made for my further consideration; and so we parted.

The next day I was at a meeting on Long Island, and a concern came heavily upon me to say something that was presented to my mind. The burden of the word was weighty, and more difficult to remove than usual; but I contended with it, and at length refused to comply. I was then in company with two women Friends travelling in the ministry. The following night one of them dreamed that she saw me sitting by a pleasant stream of water; before me a table was spread with all manner of dainties; but I was chained, so that I could not reach any of them; at which she was troubled, and asked the master of the *feast why I was* deprived of the liberty to partake of the

good things on the table. He answered, that the time had been when, on certain conditions, I might have enjoyed them to the full, but that I had refused the terms, and therefore was now justly deprived of them. She inquired of him whether this must always be my case. He answered, perhaps not; that if I would yet submit, and comply with the terms, it was not too late to partake of all the good things she saw. The interpretation of this dream, and of mine the night before, was easy and plain. They rested on my mind for several years, as cause of humbling instruction, and excitement to future care, diligence and obedience.

The next day, as we were travelling towards a town where we intended to have a meeting the following day, we were informed that a people called the New-Lights were to have a meeting there the same day, and that we might, probably, get there at the time their meeting was sitting. As soon as I heard it, I thought the word of the Lord passed through me, saying, "Thou must go to that meeting." I knew not the object, but supposed it might be to bear a testimony against their errors in worship and practice, and to proclaim the truths of the gospel in their hearing. I rode on without speaking to my companions, but the concern remained weightily with me. I endeavored, as usual, to get from under it, saying to my Master, "I am in no wise qualified for the service," and desiring that he would send by those who were fitted for such a work, or, as Moses said, "by whom he would send," so that I might be excused. Whilst I was struggling to evade this service, one of the women turned to me and said, "Why canst thou not go to this meeting of New-Lights, and proclaim to them the Truth, as our Friends did formerly?" Her speech added fuel to the fire that was burning within me. I thought it came with divine authority; but I made her no reply, having before as much as I could well bear. I, however, felt an engagement to press forward; and when we arrived at the house where we intended to tarry for refreshment,

being under great exercise of mind, I walked backward and forward across the room. The friend who had spoken to me on the road, I observed, was under great exercise also. I walked and reasoned as long as I well could. At length the power of opposition was overcome, and I was obliged to submit. I then observed to the friend, "I believe I must go to that meeting." She replied, "I believe so also." The landlord, hearing what was said, proposed to go with me, and I accepted of his offer. So being pressed in spirit to make haste, we set out, and coming to the meeting house, I stepped on the door-sill to go in, and at that instant the meeting broke up. I then stepped aside, and stood still in retirement of mind, waiting to know my duty. The people rushed out of the house, and I found my mind relieved of concern; so I was easy to return without further service. I believed the *will* to act, in this case, was accepted for the deed, and I returned in peace.

Thus, was I shown that my divine Master was able to bring me to a state of submission to his holy will; and I then concluded, that if he would excuse me from such a trying service, I would no longer refuse to speak among those of my own persuasion.

But after all this, I proceeded with a heavy heart, being sensible that my work was neglected. It was several years after this occurrence, before I fully submitted to the divine will; in all which time I went on lamenting my unfaithfulness. Sometimes I had a hope, as it were, *against hope*, that I should obtain a victory over that slavish fear which had so long enthralled me. At other times I was ready to conclude there was no cause to hope for deliverance from it. Yet, during this period, I was not wholly forsaken by my divine Master, but was enabled to perform, I hope with acceptance, some services for him; such as warning the drunkard, the profane swearer and the liar, of the evil of their ways, and advising them to repent. Sometimes, during this period, I was also concerned to accompany Friends who were

engaged to visit religious meetings in distant places, in yielding to which I found peace. Yet, when abroad on such services, and my call to the ministry was brought into view, the sense of my neglect sunk my spirits, and pain of heart attended me. Thus I spent more than twenty years!

Although, as has been mentioned, I had been many times invited, and had received indubitable evidence of the divine will, both immediately and instrumentally, so that every doubt was removed from my mind; yet the fear of man, the fear of missing my way, the fear of doing more harm than good, prevailed against me; so that I thought I should never be able to submit to the divine will concerning me. But towards the termination of the aforesaid time I felt more lively, and a concern to appear in the ministry revived. Being from home, at a meeting, I was concerned to say something to the people; but, according to my usual custom, I postponed it till a more convenient season. On this account I left the meeting in great heaviness and sorrow, for my disobedience. On the following night I dreamed that I saw two generals drawing up their armies in order of battle. Each captain had his men in order, ready to obey the command of their general, and stood at their head waiting for orders to march and stand in the engagement where he should command them. One of the generals came to a captain, who stood near me, and said to him, "You are a valiant man, and skilful in the art of war; therefore march into the right wing of the army, and in front of the battle." But the captain objected to the post assigned him, and pleaded his unfitness for it, saying, "It is a place of danger, and requires a man better qualified for such a post." The general answered that he was well qualified for the place allotted him, and that if he took it he might, by his skill and valor, do eminent service for his king and country, and gain great honor, which would be a means of promoting him to places of higher trust. He, however, desired to be excused, and

could not be persuaded to take the post assigned him. I stood by and heard all the general's arguments to persuade him to comply, until I was filled with indignation at the captain's obstinacy, especially as the general had *absolute* authority to *command*, and yet was so kind as to use *entreaty* and *persuasion*. I then said to the general, "It is my judgment that this captain is not worthy of the place assigned him, since he refuses to serve his king and country according to his capacity, and rejects the honor and promotion he might obtain. Were I in the general's place, I would set him in the rear of the army, where he will have less opportunity of promotion, and may lose his life as well as in the front." To this the general replied, "The decision is just, and in the rear he shall stand," where he was accordingly stationed.

I awoke from my sleep in great distress, under a sense of the just judgment which (like David) I had passed on myself. From this time, during several months, I was on the brink of despair; concluding I was wholly unworthy to stand in front, and, therefore, should be placed in the rear, to be killed in obscurity. After a time of great anxiety and distress of mind, the Lord was graciously pleased to look upon me with compassion, and again offered to make me a pillar in his house; and I felt a renewed concern to appear in public for his name, and in the cause of Truth.

In the year 1755, being in company with Comfort Hoag* and her companion, from New England, then on

*Comfort Hoag (afterwards Comfort Collins) was a lively minister of the gospel, from the Colony of Massachusetts. She travelled extensively on this Continent, and left many seals of her ministry in places where she had been called to labor. She was living in 1815, at the advanced age of *one hundred and five years*. Although her natural faculties were then much impaired, yet the happy effects of a religious life shone forth conspicuously through all the weakness and decay of extreme old age. A Friend, who visited her in the aforesaid year, says, "a peculiar innocence, calmness and quietude appeared in her countenance *and manner of expression*, manifesting that the *spiritual life was unimpaired* by the decay of the natural faculties and *powers*."

a religious visit to Friends in this part of the country, I attended a meeting with them, in which I felt a concern to speak to the assembly, but, as usual, evaded it. After meeting Comfort said to me, "David, why didst thou not preach to day?" I smiled at the query, seeming to wonder that she should ask such a question, and endeavored to appear innocent and ignorant of any concern of that kind. As she knew nothing of me but what she had felt, (having never before seen or heard of me,) she said no more. On the following day a similar concern came upon me, and I evaded it as before. After meeting, Comfort again said to me, "David, why didst thou not preach to-day?" I endeavored to pass it by as I did before; but she said it was not worth while to evade it, for she was assured that I ought to have preached that day, and that I had almost spoiled her meeting by refraining, which had hindered her service. When I found I could not conceal my faults; I confessed the whole, and told her I had been for more than twenty years in that practice; and then gave her a history of my life from the beginning down to that day. She admired that divine kindness was yet manifested toward me in such manner, seeing I had so long rebelled against it, and then gave me suitable caution and advice.

The following day, being at meeting, I again felt a concern to speak to the people, but endeavored to evade it. A man of some note was sitting before me, which increased my reluctance to speak. I supposed he would not be present at the next meeting, and then I would obey the call of the Lord to that service. Thus I spent the greater part of an hour. At length my divine Master, the great Master Builder, thus addressed me, "Why dost thou still delay, desiring to be excused until a more convenient season? There never will be a better time than this. I have waited on thee above twenty years; I have clearly made known to thee my will, so that all occasion of doubt has been removed; yet thou hast refused to submit until thy day is far spent; and if thou

dost not speedily comply with my commands, it will be too late; thy opportunity will be lost." I then clearly saw that if I were forsaken, and left to myself, the consequence would be death and darkness forever! At the sight of the horrible pit that yawned for me, if I continued in disobedience, my body trembled like an aspen leaf, and my soul was humbled within me! Then I said, "Lord! here am I; make of me what thou wouldst have me to be; leave me not in displeasure, I beseech thee." All my power to resist was then suspended; I forgot the great man that had been in my way; and was raised on my feet, I hardly knew how, and expressed in a clear and distinct manner what was on my mind. When I had taken my seat Comfort Hoag rose, and had an open, favorable opportunity to speak to the assembly. After meeting she told me that, during the time we had sat in silence, her whole concern was on my account; that her anxiety for my deliverance from that bondage was such, that she was willing to offer up her natural life to the Lord, if it might be a means to bring me forth in the ministry; and that on making the offering I rose to speak. On which her anxiety for me was removed, and her mind filled with concern for the people present.

At that time I was made a real Quaker, and was not ashamed to be seen trembling before the Lord. Under a sense of so great and merciful a deliverance, I saw and felt ample cause for it. It was with me as with Israel of old, when the Lord caused their captivity to return, saying he would build them as at the first, and they should fear and tremble for all his goodness, and for all the prosperity he would procure for them. My soul rejoiced in the Lord, and I magnified his excellent name, who is worthy of all honor, glory and renown forever.

It appeared to me wonderful, that I should thus be lifted out of this horrible pit of my own digging; and I was so absorbed in the love and mercy of my heavenly Benefactor, that I was filled with thankfulness and praise, attended with a desire that, in future, I might diligently

watch and wait for the pointing of his holy finger to every service he might be pleased to allot me, that so no opportunity might be lost of manifesting my gratitude by obedience to his will. My feelings were like those of a prisoner who had been long in bonds and was set at liberty.

This appearance in the public ministry was in the year 1755, and in the forty-eighth year of my age. After which it was never so great a cross to speak in meetings as it had been before. At many times, during my long silence, I had a sight that, if I were obedient to my duty, I might be made a useful member of the church, and as a pillar in God's house; but having so long rebelled, I now had no reason to expect that I should be so useful as I might have been, had I rendered early obedience to the heavenly call. However, it appeared necessary, if little were committed to my care, to be faithful in that little. Sometimes I had a hope of being useful to my fellow creatures; at other times I was left to myself, and humbled under a sense of my own inability to do any thing to the honor of God, or the help of others.

In the year 1758, I was received into the meeting of ministers and elders; and soon after obtained a certificate to visit some parts of York Government, and a part of Connecticut. A companion was provided for me; and we left home on the 24th of the Third month, 1758. We visited about eighty meetings, chiefly amongst those of other societies, to our own satisfaction; and, apparently so, to the people generally; who sat in their meetings admirably quiet; gave great attention to what was said; and were much affected. They were kind and affectionate; and seemed unwilling to part with us. I was four months and five days from home; rode about one thousand miles; and returned in peace, and thankfulness of heart to the God and Father of all our mercies.

For some years after this journey, I seldom appeared in the ministry. My friends, as well as myself, were in-

clined to believe that if ever I had a gift for that service, it was taken from me. I was reduced very low; and great distress attended my mind. I was often ready to say, "Is God's mercy quite gone? Will he be favorable no more?" I went mourning on my way, and had little comfort in my life. In the night I wished for day; and in the day I wished for night. None can conceive with what horror and anxiety I was attended; unless they have been tried with similar desertion. The cause of my being so tried, I did not then see; but after I was in some measure mercifully restored, I believed it was to humble me; that I might be brought to a more perfect and entire dependence upon the divine gift; that so nothing of *self* should be present in my ministry.

After it pleased the Lord to revisit my soul with the light of life, I felt a concern to arise, and increase, for the welfare of my fellow-creatures. I saw that the professors of Christianity were mostly at ease; and that many under our name were contented with a mere profession of the Truth; and I felt a desire that the careless and negligent might be awakened to a perception of their dangerous situation.

In the year 1771, Samuel Neale, of Ireland, being on a religious visit to Friends in America, came to my house, on his way to Maryland. Having no companion, I offered to bear him company. He accepted my offer, and we set out in the Fifth month, and spent about a month in visiting the meetings of Friends, as far as West River; those on the Eastern-Shore of Maryland; and those between Lewistown and Wilmington. After which we rested a few days, at my house. Samuel intended to visit the meeting of Friends in New Jersey, and no better companion offering, I accompanied him in that journey also. From Wilmington we went to Salem; and after visiting all the meetings thereabouts, we crossed the country to Cape May; and visited those of Great and Little Egg Harbor, Shrewsbury, and other parts of New Jersey, spending between six and seven

weeks, to our mutual satisfaction. We parted at a meeting called Solomon's; Samuel going to Philadelphia, and I returning home; where I found my family in health.

Soon after my return, Samuel wrote to me, desiring I would prepare for a journey to New England. It was very pleasant to me, to find he had a concern to visit my native country; for he had often said he saw no probability of making such a visit. I felt willing to go with him, with the approbation of my friends at home; of which I soon received their certificate; and made ready for the journey. I left home on the 19th of the Ninth month, 1771; and went to our Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia; which proved to me a good, comfortable meeting; as I believe it did to many others. Some friends, whom I highly esteemed, informed me that they were pleased with my intention to accompany Samuel Neale; which afforded me some encouragement; for I was in a low state of mind; feeling a great poverty of spirit. I was apprehensive that Friends would prefer a better companion for him; and might advise me to return home; but Samuel seemed well pleased to find me prepared for the journey.

After the Yearly Meeting had concluded, we set out for New England on the 27th of the Ninth month; and proceeded directly to Rahway; where we had a meeting on First day; and, in the afternoon, rode to New York. Here we had a meeting on Second day; and rested the day following. On Fourth day we attended the monthly meeting at Newtown, on Long Island. After which we returned to New York. Thence we rode to Shappaqua; and so on, to Ammawalk, Peachpond, Oblong, Shearman's meeting, Oswego, Jonathan Hoag's, Over-the-Creek, Nine Partners, and Salisbury; and had meetings at all those places to pretty good satisfaction. From Salisbury we rode about one hundred miles eastward to Leicester; had a meeting there; and lodged at the widow Earle's; another at Boston, and one at Salem. At-

terwards we proceeded in a north-easterly direction; attended all the meetings of Friends, as far as Casco Bay; and one on the other side of the Bay. We crossed the Bay on the 27th of Tenth month; and returned the following day. On our return, the wind was violent; and we appeared to be in imminent danger. There were fourteen persons in the boat, which was a small one, and the Bay eighteen miles wide; but, through divine mercy, we landed safely at Falmouth, and went that night to Benjamin Winslow's. From thence we travelled homeward, fifty-five miles, to Berwick; and attended the quarterly meeting at Dover. Thence we went to Kittery, Barrington, Lee, Epping, and to a newly settled place, fifty miles west of Hampton, called Ware; and had meetings at all those places. From Ware we returned to Hampton; and thence proceeded to Salem, Lynn, and Boston; and so, onward, to Nantucket; visiting meetings on the way. Afterwards we visited Rhode Island; and thence travelled through New England, and York Government; and arrived in Philadelphia after an absence of four months and a half. Having travelled, by land and water, about seventeen hundred miles; generally to good satisfaction. I returned home in peace, and found my family well.

After this journey, Samuel Neale and I were concerned to visit some parts of York Government; and some within the bounds of Connecticut. We set out on the 27th of the Fourth month, 1772, and went to the quarterly meeting at Oblong. We spent about six weeks in visiting the meetings of Friends; and holding some amongst those of other societies. On our return to Philadelphia, I parted with my beloved friend, Samuel Neale; with whom I had travelled, altogether, about nine months.

On the 16th of the Tenth month, 1772, having obtained a certificate of the concurrence of my friends, I set out in order to visit the southern provinces; in company with my friend, Robert Valentine; whom I met *at Yorktown,* in Pennsylvania. On the afternoon of the

day of our meeting, we rode to Newberry; where we attended a meeting the following day; which was not very satisfactory. I was very much depressed under the weight of the undertaking; which appeared a very great one, for two such poor striplings. For though we were not young in years, yet we were so in experience as ministers. Hitherto, I had generally travelled with old, experienced ministers; upon whom I could lean; as I was too apt to do. But now, under the prospect that the work would devolve with greater weight on me, I was much cast down; although Robert was a valuable friend, and lively minister. I mentioned to him my discouragement; but he spoke cheerfully; saying he believed we should get well along, if our Master would go with us; which he hoped would be the case. On the following day we had a large meeting at Warrington; and our Master was with us, indeed; and favored us with his life-giving presence. It was an affecting time. The power of Truth prevailed over all. Life was in dominion. Divine Love filled many hearts; and we parted with the people in much love and tenderness. This comfortable meeting relieved me of my fears, and renewed my faith. We now went on pretty cheerfully; under the hope that we should be favored, from time to time, with fresh supplies of divine help, through our journey.

We visited meetings on our way to Fairfax; were at their monthly meeting, and several others, in that neighborhood. At that time our valuable friend, John Churchman, was at Fairfax: and we attended several meetings with him. Robert and I had an evening meeting at Louisburg. It was held in their court-house, and many of their great people were present. It proved a very trying time to us both; such as I had never known before. But, after we had been sufficiently tried and mortified, we were favored with a good, comfortable opportunity to relieve ourselves; for which I was truly and humbly thankful. John Churchman remained at Amos Janney's, in Fairfax, until we had visited all the meet-

ings in that neighborhood. After finishing this service, we returned to Amos Janney's; and from thence set out on our journey southward. At parting with John Churchman, he told us he had no objections to our going forward; which afforded us great encouragement. I was inclined to believe he would advise me to return home; and not attempt further to execute my enterprise. I concluded he would perceive our weakness, and be honest to us in the cause of Truth; and I felt willing to receive such advice, not desiring to proceed without divine approbation. But, notwithstanding we had been encouraged to proceed, I went on in great fear; having a daily sense of of my own insufficiency for so great and important a service. We, however, ventured to proceed to Hopewell; and attended all the meetings in that neighborhood; then went to Smith's Creek; thence to Douglass, Camp Creek, Fork Creek, and Genito; to John Johnson's, in Amelia county; to South River, a branch of James' River; to Stanton; and so on, to North Carolina. We had meetings at all these, and some other places. In New-Garden settlement we were at one Quarterly meeting, three Monthly meetings, and eighteen public meetings. Though we had our trials and baptizing seasons, and felt need of daily assistance, the great Shepherd of Israel was near us and favored us with help. We felt great love for the people; and I hope our visit may be useful to some of them.

Soon after we entered New-Garden settlement, and before we had a meeting there, my companion heard a report that a letter had come for me; and that it contained bad news. It was said the letter had passed us; and when, or where, it would be found, was very uncertain. My companion consulted with some friends on the subject; and they thought it would be best to conceal the report from me; as we were just going to the first meeting in the settlement. However, as we rode along, he thought it right to inform me of the rumor; and told me it was reported I was sent for home. On

hearing it I was filled with concern; the enemy was busy; and I was weak; yet I continued my journey; although I had poor meetings. I supposed my friends were uneasy with my proceedings; and had sent to request me to return. The report concerning the letter spread among the people: and it was currently asserted that Wilmington was burnt to ashes; that all my property was consumed; and that I was sent for on that account. These were heavy tidings; and all true, for anything I knew to the contrary. After several days of great anxiety, a hope arose in my mind that it was not so bad as was reported; for, as I turned my mind towards home, it seemed to me, that my dwelling house at least was safe. I had now been about ten days under this trouble, when we lodged at the house of a Friend whose wife was a sensible, religious woman, well acquainted with the snares of the enemy; and she, hearing me say something of returning, as I could hear nothing further of the letter, told me she believed there was little or no truth in the reports; but that it was the work of Satan and his emissaries, to hinder my service, and send me home. This was a seasonable caution.

When we had visited nearly all the meetings in that neighborhood, and as we designed to proceed to Bush River, in South Carolina, I thought it best to use every means to find the letter, before we went further. I therefore hired a young man to go back in pursuit of the letter as far as Hillsborough, sixty miles, if necessary. After proceeding about thirty miles in the search, he found it; and brought it to me, just as we were going into a meeting. I opened and read the letter, much to my comfort. There was no account of fire, or any other unpleasant occurrence in it. Thus all my uneasiness was removed.

This storm being happily blown over, we set out for South Carolina. Zachariah Dicks, John Carter, William Lindley, and John Unthank, accompanied us to Bush River, two hundred miles; which we travelled in

five days. Two of the Friends remained at Bush River, while we went to Georgia. We went afterwards to Wateree and Pedee. At the latter place we had two meetings with Friends. There we parted with the Friends before mentioned. They had been our pleasant and affectionate companions for about a month. After our separation, Robert and I felt lonesome; having to ride one hundred and twenty miles before we could come amongst Friends again. During two days we had guides to conduct us; then, hoping we should be able to find the way without their assistance, we advised them to return home. We arrived at Richard Cox's, at Neuse River, in safety; and after having two satisfactory meetings there, we rode fifteen miles, to Great Contentney; where we had a meeting. From thence, we went to Henry Horne's at Tar River, and had a meeting at his house; which was a poor, low time. The professors there seemed inclined to the Baptists. From Tar River we went to Rich Square; and, after attending their meeting, we set out towards the old settlement, in North Carolina. As we proceeded towards the lower settlements, in Carolina and Virginia, among a wise people, as I supposed, fat and full, possessing great numbers of slaves, I was very pensive; and so much depressed, that I would gladly have passed them by, and returned immediately home. But I saw no way for me, but to look to my divine Instructor; and depend on Him who had hitherto been our sufficient helper, in every strait and difficulty. After a time of trial, I was favored with a degree of fortitude and resignation. I went down among them in fear; but we found some tender, loving, well-inclined people; and were favored with heavenly help, and enabled to proceed, I hope, to the honor of Truth, and advantage of the people; for many of whom we felt a tender regard, and parted with them in much love.

Although they were generally in the practice of keeping slaves, yet they had begun to see the error of it, and were desirous to be relieved of the burden, but saw no

way to effect it, to the satisfaction of themselves and their slaves, because of the cruel laws in force in these colonies; by which, if a man set his slaves free, they would be liable to be seized and sold to the highest bidder; which appeared grievous, both to themselves and their owners.

We visited nearly all the meetings in the lower parts of North Carolina and Virginia, to our satisfaction. We then passed into Maryland, and visited the meetings on the western shore as far as Baltimore; from thence we came directly home. I found my family and temporal concerns as well as usual; and had great peace and satisfaction of mind, under a thankful sense of the many favors we had received, and that divine assistance had been afforded in every trying season. We had been engaged in this visit just five months; had travelled nearly three thousand miles; had attended one hundred and five public meetings; and arrived at home on the 16th of the Third month, 1773.

After my return from this journey I did not travel far from home until the Fifth month, 1776; when, in company with John Perry, I left home to pay a religious visit to Friends in New England.

5th month 19th, we attended Haverford meeting, and next day reached Isaac Bolton's, in Bucks County; thence to Rahway, where we met with Rebecca Wright and Phebe Yarnall, who were engaged on a similar visit to New England; and after being at Rahway Meeting, we went on together to New York. 24th, we were at a meeting at Flushing, on Long Island. After having several other meetings on the island, we returned to the main land, and had a meeting at Westchester on the 28th; thence to Mamaroneck and Purchase, where the negro masters were closely dealt with in the public service of the meeting.

After having a meeting at North Castle, we went on to Richard Titus's, at Greenwich, forty miles eastward

of New York, in Connecticut government, and had a meeting at Jesse Hallock's, who married Edward Burling's daughter. Charles Brock having accompanied us from Rahway, we were now joined by John Alsop, who came to pilot us, and we all set forward on the 3d of 6th month through Connecticut towards Rhode Island. Going by way of New Milford, New Haven, Guilford, Seabrook, and New London to Stonington, on the 6th we arrived at John Collins's and attended Hopkinton meeting, which was held in silence, except that John Perry said a few words near the close.

7th. We had an appointed meeting at Hopkinton, which was a more open time; next day we had a hard, laborious meeting at Westerly; but something was communicated to the people near the close for their help, if they would accept it. Thence, with Thomas Wilbur for a guide, we went to Jonathan Hoxie's and lodged, and next day attended Richmond meeting, which was a good, comfortable time. After a satisfactory sitting at John Knowles's, where we dined, we went on to South Kingston, or the Upper Meeting, which we attended on the 10th of 6th month; and next day were at the Lower Meeting, where, after long and close exercise, we had a favored opportunity together. After dining at Thomas Hazard's, we crossed the two ferries and arrived at Newport on Rhode Island. The rest of our company remaining there, John Perry and I rode out of town to James Mitchell's, where we were kindly received and entertained.

12th. We attended the Meeting for Sufferings, held at Portsmouth, and were at several sittings with them to satisfaction. We attended all the sittings of the Yearly Meeting to edification and comfort. The meeting closed on the 18th, and next day we had an appointed meeting at Seaconnet. 20th, we attended Accoaksett Monthly *Meeting, and* the day following had a large meeting held

in an orchard, for it was supposed that one-half the people could not have got into the meeting house; but it was mostly a silent opportunity. We then rode six miles to Accushnet, and attended meeting there on First day; thence to New Bedford, and lodged at Joseph Rotch's. On Second day we were at Aponegansett Monthly Meeting, which was very large, and a favored season. Returning again to Joseph Rotch's, we next day at sunrise went on board S. Starbuck's sloop, bound for Nantucket; and in eight hours cast anchor without the bar, but got in near night and lodged at William Rotch's.

We spent several days on Nantucket visiting aged and sick people, and had several very large public meetings, also were at their Monthly Meeting. On the 2d of 7th month we again embarked with Samuel Starbuck, and in five hours landed at Wood's Hole, where we lodged at the widow Wing's. Next day had a satisfactory meeting at Falmouth; and the day following, after dining at Benjamin Swift's, we rode 16 miles to Sandwich, and lodged at Joshua Wing's. After attending the several sittings of the Quarterly Meeting held at Sandwich, Phebe Yarnall and Rebecca Wright left us and went on toward Cape Cod. We had travelled together in much unity and harmony for about seven weeks, and now parted in the same, their prospect leading towards Boston and eastward. John Perry and I staid at meeting at Sandwich on First day, and next day had a meeting at Rochester in the morning, also one in the afternoon at Long Plain.

Ninth of Seventh month we rode through Taunton to Moses Brown's, near Providence, and next day went to the Meeting for Sufferings held at Smithfield. At this meeting the sorrowful affair of T. Davis was discoursed of. We then attended the Quarterly Meeting held at Smithfield, and returned to Moses Brown's. On First day we were at the morning and afternoon meetings

held at Providence. On the 14th we attended a poor meeting at Greenwich, and lodged at Benjamin Congdon's; next day, had a very satisfactory meeting at Neshanticut, in which the seasoning virtue of Truth was felt to our mutual edification. We had the company of Moses Brown, his wife's mother, and sister Mary Olney, Job Scott, Samuel Rodman and divers other Friends, who dined with us at the house of Elisha Harris, a man partly convinced of Friends' principles. Here we had a blessed opportunity together—a time of the renewing of life, in which the Divine Master was with us, strengthening and uniting us in the love of the gospel.

On the 17th, we attended old Smithfield Preparative Meeting, and next day that at Wainsokett, which was comfortable. Thence we went to Moses Farnum's, at Uxbridge, and were at a meeting there the day following. On First day, the 21st, we attended the meeting at Scituate, which was very full, being composed of people of divers professions; but ability was given to say what seemed necessary for the occasion. At this place John Perry was poorly, and Moses Farnum and Moses Brown stayed with us and lodged at Gideon Harris's. Next morning these Friends left us, and in the afternoon we set out for Hartford in Connecticut. Passing through Coventry, Plainfield and Windham, we reached Hartford, and thence rode on through Farmington, Waterbury and Woodbury to my brother-in-law Dobson Wheeler's, at New Milford, where we attended their Fifth day meeting, and then went to see sister Sarah Noble. We also visited Joseph Ferris's family, and on First day attended Friends meeting on the Plain, which was but a poor and low time. In the afternoon we had a meeting at the separate meeting house in New Milford, the Baptist and Presbyterian teachers being present; but they were too full of expectation of words, of which I had not much for them, and John Perry thought no fish were caught. 29th, we rode to the Oblong, and next day had a good

meeting at the Nine Partners. We then went to my brother Benjamin Ferris's, at Oblong, and attended meeting there.

On the 1st of the 8th month, in company with William Russel and Paul Osborn, we set out and went forward toward the North River, which we crossed at New Windsor, being upwards of two miles wide, and lodged at a tavern about forty-three miles from Oblong. Next day we reached Benjamin Schooley's, at Pauline Hill, and the day following got to the Great Meadows, and attended Hardwich meeting on the 4th, which was to pretty good satisfaction. Thence we went on through Kingwood, and lodged at Samuel Eastburn's, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and thence home, from which I had been absent eleven weeks. We had travelled, by land and water, eight hundred miles. I was favored with peace of mind, and found my family well.

1779, 5 mo. 21. I am now drawing towards the conclusion of life, being, this day, seventy-two years of age. For the encouragement of others, I will now briefly recapitulate some of the kind dealings of Providence towards me. The God of my life, my Maker and Preserver, has been propitious to me, from youth to old age. The fear of the Lord, which preserves from evil, was placed in my heart when I was but eight years old, so that I was afraid to offend him. In the twelfth year of my age I was mercifully visited, and called out of the vanities of the world; at which time I received a promise, that if I sought first the kingdom of God, all other necessary things should be added; and I have found the promise true, for I never have wanted any of the good things of this life. I have been blessed with sufficient for myself and friends, and something to spare to the poor. And I esteem it a great favor that I received a disposition to communicate to those who stood in need. If all men would "seek first the kingdom of heaven and the righte-

ousness thereof," and carefully attend to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, with which all might be favored, I believe they would be blest with a sufficient portion of wealth. O, that mankind were wise! and would early seek that treasure which cometh from above, and which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal! And may we all beware of loving the world, and living at ease in the enjoyment of its good and pleasant things! Even those who have been favored with remarkable divine visitations, and have been put in possession of "the upper and the nether springs," have great need to be on their guard. When we enjoy health and plenty, and all things seem pleasant around us, we are prone to forget the Lord, and neglect those "things that belong to our peace." This I know by sorrowful experience. In this way I was brought into a long, dark and mournful situation, and kept from yielding obedience to my own duty respecting the ministry. Although I had been called out of the world and uncommonly favored, as before related; although I had forsaken the vanities and flesh-pleasing gratifications in which I had delighted; although I had left the college in a way so mortifying; had given up all to death, and freely borne the cross of being esteemed a fool by the world; afterwards joining with the despised Quakers, adopting their language, dress and behaviour; all which I could not have done without divine assistance; yet, after all this, I was so forgetful and ungrateful to my heavenly Benefactor, that it is a wonder I was ever restored. And I have no doubt that thousands, through negligence, even after they have been called out of the world, and have run well for a season, have been finally lost; swimming away in the riches and pleasures of this transitory state. This I have written for a warning to others.

In the early part of the winter, after my return from New England in 1776, I was reduced to a poor state of health, and so continue. I believe I have not lately been ever clear of a slow fever; but have generally been

able to go to our religious meetings at and near home, sometimes to Philadelphia, and once into Maryland, the lower counties on Delaware, &c. &c.

DAVID FERRIS.

Wilmington, 5th month, 1779.

APPENDIX.

The following letters, on the subject of Slavery, give a lively view of the concern under which our predecessors labored in the cause of African Emancipation. With them it was a *religious concern*. We of the present generation can have no adequate idea of the trials which our Friends of that day endured, in the prosecution of the subject. To many of them it involved the most serious consequences, even the exchange of affluence and ease for poverty and hardship. Nothing but *religious concern* could have prepared them to make such a sacrifice; nothing but a *religious ground* could have supported them under it. To them the call was extended, as it was to the young man mentioned by the Evangelist—"Go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." In obedience to that call, and with faith in the providence of God, they went up to the altar, and laid upon it "even all their living." No political or selfish motives stained the purity of their offering; no love of popularity or of personal distinction swayed their conduct. Love to God and man was their spring of action, and peace of mind their ultimate object.

The letters on the subject of slavery which immediately follow, are inserted with the view to illustrate the fore-

going remarks, and as affording a rare specimen of that affectionate *plain dealing* which then marked the character of Friends, and which was soon followed by such abundance of fruit. David Ferris was a contemporary and fellow-laborer with John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, being intimately acquainted with both. Like them, he made universal benevolence the ground and spring of his action; like them he sought Divine direction, and was careful to follow it. Under the holy influence of love, and from the pure impulse of religious concern, he used to go forth alone to visit those who held slaves; travelling from neighborhood to neighborhood, and from house to house; and, while earnestly pleading the cause of the colored man, was as earnestly concerned for the *freedom and salvation* of his master. Great was the work, and wonderful the result of their labors. Many who saw the first action of the Society of Friends in the cause of African Emancipation, lived to see that Society wholly disenthralled, standing before the world without a slave within its borders.

The success of their undertaking furnishes a striking instance of the great importance of adopting right means for the accomplishment of a right end.

The letters on other subjects are added as further illustrating the religious character of David Ferris, and exhibiting his concern for the promotion of Truth and Righteousness. The weighty counsel and sound Gospel truths they contain, are as appropriate and instructive at the present day, as they were at the time when they were written.

WILMINGTON, y^e^ 20th 9 mo., 1767.

Dear Friends, Samuel Field and Wife:—

I have been acquainted with you for many years, and have always entertained for you a sincere regard and esteem, with desires for your present and eternal welfare. I have remembered a charge given to Israel of old—"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him." Whether you continue to hold slaves or not I am not informed, but, if you are yet in that practice, I wish you seriously to consider the law that was given forth under the present dispensation, on this wise; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Now, I wish you to compare your own conduct with this law. Would you be willing your own children should be taken into some remote land, and they and their posterity brought up in ignorance, and held in perpetual slavery? Or would you like that one of your neighbors, who had the power, should act so by your own family, and refuse to listen to any entreaty for your release? If any neighbor should treat you and your children in this manner, what sort of a Christian would you judge him to be?

The law I have recited was enacted under the Christian dispensation, and ought to be the rule of our conduct. It relates to all men, of all nations, colors and languages, of every rank and degree, to an Ethiopian or African equally with an Englishman or American. The poor Blacks have the same right to freedom that we have, and Truth and Righteousness require that it should be granted to them. Now, if justice demands that they should be treated like other men, where does the slaveholder stand, and what is his condition? Is he not robbing his neighbor and oppressing the poor, who have none to help them nor plead their cause? It is high time for slaveholders to look about them, and speedily

to devise measures to extricate themselves from the iniquity of their conduct, before it be too late.

Now, my dear friends, your time, as well as my own, is far spent, and I much desire that your conduct in relation to slave-keeping, as well as to all other concerns, may be such, that you may lay down your heads in peace at last.

I am satisfied, that if you had duly considered this subject, and laid aside all consideration of worldly interests, you would long ago have released the captive from his bonds, and have let the oppressed go free; for I believe it is as honest, and as consistent with Christianity, to take a man's money or goods for nothing, as it is to take his labor. Besides, there is something worse in the iniquity of slavery than taking his labor without compensation. The poor slave is not only defrauded of his liberty; he is forced to come and go at the command of another, when many times, from want of health, he is not fit to perform the service required. Yet they are obliged to obey, and do often obey under great suffering and hardship. Now, this is grievous oppression, of which every slave-keeper is guilty more or less.

The Scriptures declare that "he who oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker," and among all mankind I know of none who are *poorer*, or more *oppressed*, than the poor Africans, under the professors of Christianity. Besides, they are generally brought up in ignorance. As an unrighteous covetousness is the motive for holding them as slaves, so it is for keeping them in ignorance. Learning cannot be acquired without an expense of time and money. Some masters and mistresses are so void of Christianity (although they profess it) that they are not ashamed to use this as an argument to defend their conduct, adding, as a further justification, that learning will not make them better but worse slaves! Others, who do not venture so to express themselves, follow the same course and for the same reasons.

Very few of the masters are concerned to teach or in-

struct their slaves in the principles of the Christian religion—to bring them up in the right way, or to take them diligently to places of worship. To the shame of their profession, it may be said, they manifest little care on the subject. Indeed, it could hardly be expected that those whose practice is so repugnant to Christianity, should incline to teach their slaves its principles; because, if it were honestly done, the slave would be taught to condemn the master, and to upbraid him with acting inconsistently with his own principles. If slaveholders were to teach their negroes to read and write, to give them good instruction, to use all reasonable means to promote their attendance at meetings for divine worship, they might indeed have less to answer for than *they* have who *wholly neglect these duties.* But all this would not relieve the oppressed, nor restore them to their just rights. Their owners would still be their oppressors; the oppressed would still cry to heaven, and heaven would still hear their cries. My desire for you is, that you may so act as to stand clear, and be acquitted in the day of account.

I pity the slaveholder far more than I pity his slaves, because I believe him to be in a worse condition than they. *I should choose rather to be the slave than his master or mistress.**

If you yet hold any slaves, I do entreat you to set them free immediately. Teach your children by example to shun the gain of oppression. Do not transfer your negroes to your offspring, nor leave them so that your

* This letter was written in the year 1767, *eighteen years before Cowper wrote "The Task."* It is pleasing to see the generous and truly Christian sentiment contained in this paragraph, so elegantly expressed by the poet, after the lapse of so many years:

"———: dear as freedom is, and, in my heart's
Just estimation, prized above all price;
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him."
Cowper's Task, Book 2d, line 33, &c.

children shall expect any thing from them, or be laid under any temptation to become their oppressors. Set them all free now, whilst it is in your power. Give them a full discharge in writing; and by a bond secure to the minors their freedom, when they shall arrive at age. Let the manumissions be legally drawn and executed, so that neither you nor your children, nor any other person, may take them again into bondage. Let these instruments of writing be duly and safely recorded.

Do not plead that your slaves are too old, or say they are drunken or thievish, and will not be able to get their living. All these things are nothing to you! Do your duty, and then leave them to Providence. You have no more cause to be concerned about their future conduct, than you have about the conduct of others. Only do your duty and you may trust for the rest.

As to their age, if they were even seventy years old they ought to be liberated, and breathe a free air as long as they can breathe at all, and to be well cared for, and kindly treated and maintained. Those who have served thirty or forty years, ought not, by any means, to be sent away empty, but should be liberally furnished out of your stock. Israel of old was commanded, on liberating their *brethren* who had been bond-servants, that they should not let them go away empty; "thou shalt furnish him liberally, out of that with which the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." In this gospel dispensation all mankind are our *brethren*, and ought to be treated as such.

Suppose a man has served until he is 40 years old, that is 19 years more than is just; and his service has been well worth £12 per annum, amounting to £228. Now, to turn such a one away and give him nothing is unchristian, yea, it is dishonest! It shows that we *would not pay a just debt unless compelled by the law.*

I have often thought of you in relation to this subject, with desires for your well doing, and felt as if it would be like "suffering sin upon my neighbor," if I should be silent. I have therefore given you some hints of my

mind, which I desire may be well taken, as they are well meant. Do not make light of them, and laugh at my concern, as pitying my weakness. Slaveholding is injustice, and will be found a heavy burden at last.

From your friend and well wisher,

DAVID FERRIS.

Wilmington, y^e^ 20th 9th mo., 1774.

Esteemed Friend, Robert Pleasants,—I have often been thoughtful of thee, since I was in your part of the country, desiring that thou mayest so steer thy course through time, as to come safely to the haven of eternal rest in the conclusion.

There is one circumstance which has particularly engaged me in concern for thee, and that is the condition of the poor black people now by thee held in bondage. I fear that to hold them in a state of slavery, deprived of their natural right, may be a means of depriving thee of thy own freedom, and not only prevent thee from being so serviceable in thy day, as otherwise thou might be, but be a bar in the way of thy peace here, and hereafter. I believe that a further advance, on thy part, must be made, in order to make thee a free man, and enable thee to sing on the banks of deliverance. I apprehend thou art chargeable with several omissions which require attention.

In the first place I conclude thy poor blacks have been generally brought up in ignorance; neither taught to read or write—nor have had any proper instruction in the principles of the Christian religion. Abraham instructed his household, and commanded them after him, that they might keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. This poor people being brought by force into a strange land, and kept in bondage, have no way to get learning, or to receive instruction from man, without the allowance or assistance of those who hold

them as slaves. The negroes are rational creatures, and as accountable to their Maker, as white men and women are. Why then should they not have the same advantages of learning and instruction that we have? Why should not they be as carefully informed that there is a God, and that He is to be worshipped, feared and obeyed by all his rational family? that we and they are all favored with "a manifestation of his *holy spirit* to profit withal"? And why should they not be pressed to a close attention, and obedience to its directions? Inasmuch as we profess to believe that "God is a spirit," and that the worship which is acceptable to *him*, must be performed "in *Spirit and in truth*," and may be performed in silently waiting upon him, why should not *they* be *so* instructed as well as our own children? and why not (as well as they) be constantly taken to meetings while they are young, in order that they may not depart from so good a way, when they are old? These things are worthy our serious consideration, and close examination, that those who take upon them the charge of bringing up numbers of their fellow-men, may see how far short they may be of a faithful discharge of duty towards them. I am sensible that negro-masters object to this, saying, that their colored children are not willing to go to Friends' meeting! But consider the reason of such unwillingness! Is it not because they have not been brought up in the way they ought to walk in? But whatever their objection may be, it ought not to be an excuse for the omission of a religious duty.

In the next place, some are unjustly held in bondage for the term of life, others many years after they ought to be free: and so the poor are oppressed, and labor extorted from them by force, which is the height of injustice! If negro-masters would weightily consider that precept of our Lord, which is short and easily understood, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," they would easily discover that they would not be willing, either that *they* or *their*

children should be brought up in total ignorance, kept in bondage for life, obliged to labor all their days for nothing but a poor, hard, coarse living; with mean food, worse clothing, and lodging still worse! and after all to die with the prospect of leaving their posterity to the children of their oppressors from generation to generation forever.

Solomon says, "he that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want;" suppose he wholly alluded to *outward* want, I think it should be sufficient to deter any one from such injustice: but that will not be the only *want* which shall overtake them that oppress the poor.

Slave-keepers are *extortioners*, to all intents and purposes; and what must be the end of the extortioner? I would ask, if it be possible that a man of understanding could bring himself to believe, that it is *not oppression* to deprive a man of his liberty, and force him to labor all his days, with rigor, for nothing? Or are people at this day determined to disregard the sentence of the Almighty against *extortioners*, which solemnly declares that "no extortioner shall inherit the kingdom of God." If the usage generally extended to the negroes, be not "extortion," I know not where to look for anything that deserves the name!

I cannot suppose, that at this time of the day I need use *arguments* to convince thee of the evil of slave-keeping. *Obedience* is what I judge to be wanting; and it is sorrowful to think, that people should go on in the way they know to be wrong. I doubt not that thou hast seen the error of the practice, at many times; and if thy sight is now clouded and darkened it is to be lamented; but if thy eyes are now open to see the subject in its true light, as a practice altogether inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, I beseech thee not to dally, or put it off any longer. Do justice without delay. Don't hesitate about the value of thy slaves, neither boggle at the law, saying, "if I set them free the public will take them,

and sell them into worse slavery, and it will be hard that the poor negroes should suffer by my act." I fully believe if thou could see the *danger* of thy present state, and could lay aside the influence of *pecuniary interest*, so as to be fully resigned, and willing to part with all for the Truth's sake, a way would be made for thy escape and for the safety of the negroes also. If the Lord requires thee to set thy slaves free, obey him promptly, and leave the result to him, and peace shall be within thy borders.

I am aware that there are many difficulties in thy way. Thy slaves are very numerous. Some are too old to labor, some in their prime, and some too young to work. Thou mayest and probably dost say, "What can I do with them? how can I dispose of them better than by keeping them and using them kindly?"

Let us suppose that thou hast an *hundred* of them; that *twenty* of them are old, and partly unfit to labor; that *forty* of them are too young to earn their living, and *forty* of them in their prime for labor. Thou mayest set the old ones free, and obligate thyself and thy estate to maintain them well, and use them kindly the remainder of their days. Those in their prime, give to them a full discharge from all future service, and to those of them who have served thee after they were of age, pay them for that service honestly, and thereby put them into a way of getting their living. This will be just, and is undoubtedly thy duty. Let the young ones be all manumitted; and put it out of thy own power, and the power of thy heirs, to take them back into bondage, after they are of age. And let them all be taught to read, and write, and understand arithmetic. "Train them up in the way they should go," keep them constantly to religious meetings, on the first and other days of the week, even as thou wouldst have thy own children dealt with; then, when they arrive at maturity, they will be prepared for freedom; and when all this is done, or rightly in the way to be accomplished, thou wilt be *a free man*.

As for thy past errors and deficiencies in holding them as slaves, and bringing them up in ignorance, before thy own mind was so fully enlightened on these subjects, perhaps that may be passed by; for God may wink at errors committed in the days of our ignorance. But without a submission on thy part to a course of action such, or nearly such, as I have mentioned, I cannot believe thy state a safe one. Even if it should require all thy estate to relieve thee from slaveholding, and thereby thou couldst obtain lasting peace, I think it would be a happy exchange. The great object of my writing to thee at this time is that peace may be thy portion forever. In thy case it is my solid judgment that slave-keeping is a sin; and Christ said, if men die in their sins where he is gone they cannot come.

Thou may think it strange that I carry my judgment so far as to think there is no hope for the slaveholder that he may obtain peace! But if *justice* is equally due to the black man and the white one, I cannot see room to hope for those who daily live in the violation of every rule of justice toward the colored man; for this is daily to rob them of their rights, of their property, and of their liberty also. If they were to treat *thee* or *me* so, we should find no difficulty in pronouncing judgment against them, as wicked and unjust men.

The prophet, in the name of the Lord, said, "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." And in what does not slavery come up to this case? Does it not even exceed it? for the people to whom the prophet spake, did not hold their neighbors in perpetual slavery! but only cheated them out of *some* of their labor!

I am concerned for thee, however well thou mayest think of thyself, and of thy present situation. I think it necessary for thee to look about thee, to leave nothing undone, that can be done, for the deliverance of the poor from bonds and oppression, and thyself from danger of

losing thy peace. I would advise thee to walk softly the remainder of thy days, be they many or few. Humble thyself before the Lord, while the door of mercy is open, as I hope it yet is. Do what thou canst to set a good example to thy children and neighbors, in relation to the emancipation of thy slaves; for thy day is hastening over, and it would be a dreadful thing to die and leave all thy colored people in slavery to thy posterity. It would be better to leave thy children beggars! Remember Zaccheus; he was made willing to restore four-fold to any he might have wronged, beside giving half his goods to the poor; and Jesus said to him, "this day has salvation come to thy house." I hardly know how to stop, but time fails me. I would desire thee not to think lightly of the hints I have given thee, for I believe they are important to the welfare of thee and thy family.

From thy friend

DAVID FERRIS.

The following letter from Robert Pleasants was written nearly three years after the foregoing was written to him by David Ferris, and furnishes cause to believe that the seed sown by the latter, under deep concern for his friend, was not unfruitful.

VIRGINIA, CURLES, 9th mo. 11, 1777.

Esteemed friend, Samuel R. Fisher,—A favorable opportunity offering by our friends John Crew and Gerard Ellyson, who propose to attend your Yearly Meeting, I sit down in consequence of thy request and in compliance with my promise, to advise thee how far I have proceeded in the business of manumitting the slaves under my care; and can with a degree of satisfaction say that I have so far completed it as that I believe there is not more than five or six remaining, who,

being children, and living at a distance, I neither knew their ages nor the names of some of them till within a few days. I intend shortly to finish that business, and trust to consequences, believing that He who hath called to the work will prosper it, notwithstanding the opposition which some violent spirits have made and seem still disposed to make. I may further inform thee that divers Friends of late have given up, and others seem freely disposed to give up, their negroes, so that should our Assembly (which by adjournment meets, I think, the 10th of next month) repeal the unrighteous law against their freedom, as some expect, I hope Friends in a general way will not only be relieved from the burthen, but have the satisfaction to see many others of them act as useful members of society in a state of freedom.

Thy assured friend,

ROBERT PLEASANTS.

WILMINGTON y^e^ 12th of 1st mo., 1768.

My dear young friend, Ann Taylor:—

During the short period of our acquaintance I have felt for thee that love and good-will which desires thy well being here and hereafter. I wish to encourage thee to set out betimes on that long journey which requires the whole term of life to perform, to the greatest advantage. The sooner the work is begun the better for thee, because, in early life, there are not so many hinderances, arising from wrong habits, and an alienation of mind from divine good. The heavenly hand has been extended in love, to gather thee from all empty enjoyments into the fold of peace. "Now is the accepted time," while thou art called and invited, and drawn by the cords of Divine love: that love which is the mark of discipleship in the church of Christ. I believe thou hast felt it. The Truth has appeared beautiful in thy

sight; and those who are travelling in the way of peace, have been objects of thy near affection. I much desire that thou mayest be made a partaker with them in the joys that abide forever. These are they that receive "an hundred fold" of enjoyment in this life, and in that which is to come life everlasting.

When my attention has been turned toward thee, of latter time, my mind has been invested with concern, and a strong desire for thy preservation in the right way; and particularly in relation to thy marriage. A married state is the most desirable, and most comfortable of all states, provided we enter it, as the apostle says, "*Only in the Lord:*" that is, as I understand him, under *divine direction*, to the right person, at the right time, and in the right way. But of that person, time, and way, uninstructed by divine wisdom, we are by no means competent to judge. Without such direction we must proceed in the dark, and shall be more likely to miss the right object, than to attain it. Those who miss it, mostly make unto themselves a rough uneasy path to walk in, and always an unsafe one. When men and women are not rightly joined, and losses, crosses and disappointments occur, there will be a disposition to blame each other,—sometimes to wish they had never seen one another—and, in times of great trial, even to express that wish. *I have known such things;* and where the union has no deeper foundation than mere *natural* affection, better cannot be reasonably expected. Those who marry from motives of convenience, or with selfish views, frequently pass along through life in discord and uneasiness, and often lay a foundation for more lasting unhappiness. The uneasiness of their state makes them fretful, and being without any sure anchor to the mind, they are tossed about hither and thither; rather prepared to hinder than help one another in their religious progress. This state it is fearful to contemplate, and the earnest prayer of my soul has been, that thou mayest escape the danger of a

connection with an unsuitable companion, in bonds which death only can dissolve.

On the other hand, if the great end of our creation becomes the primary object of concern,—if we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and obtain it—if we keep near our divine Director, and proceed in the holy fear, we shall have no cause to dread the event, either in reference to the temper and disposition of our allotted companion, or to the means of a comfortable subsistence. They who are thus happily united, will go along the road of life, rejoicing in that they are joined together in the will of heaven; and when losses, and disappointments, and afflictions overtake them, they will sympathize with each other, and freely help to bear one another's burdens. Oh, how blessed are they who are thus joined,—how happy for themselves and their posterity. How instructive to their children to see their parents' constant care to promote each other's happiness, —to see them concerned, by circumspect walking, to set in all things a good example to their family, and those who dwell round about them. To these the promise is fulfilled appertaining to those who first seek the heavenly riches, that all *necessary things* shall be superadded.

Dear Ann, although thou mayest resist the heavenly call, and fail to obtain the blessing intended, yet I hope better things of thee, and things that accompany salvation. Life and death are set before thee. Life is offered,—therefore, I beseech thee, choose life and live. In order to obtain it, and to grow in it, we must be sober, humble, self-denying, and abide under the cross of Christ. We must not live at ease, or in an unconcerned state. We must not love the world, nor take delight in earthly things. It is now a time of divine visitation,—a day of love to thy soul, in which thou mayest be gathered into the heavenly fold. It would be cause of great joy to me to see and hear of thy obedience to the cross of Christ, —to know that thou art concerned to come forward in the discharge of every Christian duty. On the contrary,

it would be exceedingly sorrowful to see or hear of thy falling away from the Truth. Now is the time,—a time of love, and undoubtedly thy best time. Do not let it pass away unimproved. Let not the world, nor the things of the world divert thy attention from seeking after "the one thing needful," "that good part which shall not be taken away:" for what profit would it be, to gain all the wealth, the pleasures, and honors of the world; and thereby lose thy own soul. Oh, dreadful loss! I tremble at the thought of it. I have much love in my heart, and good-will towards thee; I therefore press these things upon thy attention.

Present my kind love to thy dear mother, and to John Carter's family.

From thy assured friend,

DAVID FERRIS.

WILMINGTON, ye 1st of 9th mo. 1772.

Dear Friend Catharine Hallock, at Newburg:—

Thine, dated the 3d of 8th mo. 1772, is just now received. I take it very kind of thee that thou hast remembered us in this way, and gladly accept the favor. The reading of thy letter recalled to memory, in a very lively manner, the near unity and fellowship felt and enjoyed with thee and thy father's family, when with you at Newburg. And I believe if you live near the Truth with which you have been favored, you will be made a blessing to your neighborhood, and be instrumental in spreading the divine light to and among the poor benighted inhabitants of your vicinity.

When with you, dear Catharine, I thought I felt the divine goodness, and heavenly regard, extended towards thee in a particular manner, in order for thy help, hoping thou mayest be preserved near the spring of life, so as to become an instrument of good to others. The Lord has

been good to thee. He has blessings in store for those who keep near him and turn away from other lovers. My dear friend, "keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The heavenly fountain is open for thee to bathe in. Do not forget the goodness of God, which was eminently extended to all of us, and particularly to thyself, at the last sitting we had in your family. It was a time of extraordinary favor. The Lord was very kind and gracious to you; and will ever be so, if you mind the light which has shone upon you, and continue to walk in it. Beware of forgetfulness. Do not forget the Lord, but often think upon his name. I believe that many, by living at ease, and neglecting to watch against temptation; lose sight of the heavenly riches; and not a few, by letting their minds run after earthly things, are finally lost.

My dear friend, it is a great favor to feel the love of God uniting us together. If we dwell in it we must necessarily love one another, whether present or absent, together or separate. All the faithful are children of one Father, and his uniting love and virtue flows from one of them to another, by the feeling of which we know that we have passed from death unto life. By this "love of the brethren," all men may know that we are disciples of Christ. Let us cherish it, and live in it. There is nothing so excellent, so beautiful, so engaging, as this heavenly uniting love. I thought many times, when lately travelling among you, that the near affection and unity I felt for, and with some of my dear brethren and sisters, were an ample compensation for all the trouble and fatigue I endured. I long for the salvation of all my fellow men, and that they may come to know experimentally what this love and unity is, by their effects. The world, or those who are at friendship with the world, know nothing of it,—neither can they know it, until they come out of the world. All the living members of the Church of Christ experience something of it, and the nearer we live to the Truth the more we shall know of it. Therefore

let us so live that we may be as Epistles written in one another's hearts.

I have often thought of thee and the other members of your family since I saw you, and should rejoice to see you again. As that may never be in this state of being, I pray that we may all so walk, and so live in the Lord's fear, that we may meet hereafter in peace; for that is the ultimate object of our creation, as well as of all the blessings conferred upon us, in our passage through time.

I was much pleased on receiving a letter from thee, and shall be glad to receive a few lines from thee or any of the family, letting me know of your health, and the state of affairs among you, and the few Friends, situated near the residence of thy sister Sands.

My dear friend, my heart flows with love and good will towards thee, with earnest desire for thy help and preservation. My dear love is to thy father and mother, brothers and sisters.

From thy well wishing friend,

DAVID FERRIS.

N. B. Samuel Neale is lately gone to Ireland, and he desired me, when I wrote to any of our friends, to give his kind love to them.

D. F.

Extract of a letter to David Ferris, Jr.

WILMINGTON, y^e^ 10th of 8th mo. 1773.

Dear Cousin, David Ferris:—

My mind was impressed some days past, with concern for thee as a near kinsman; remembering that as our works shall be here, so must be our reward hereafter and forever. I apprehend that thou hast not been earnestly concerned to be prepared for thy latter end, but hast been diverting thyself with the pleasant things of this life,

delighting in airy unprofitable company. Now, in the common course of things, thy days are half spent, and perhaps much more than half spent, and if thou should be shortly called upon to give up thy stewardship, and not be ready for it, how fearful would be thy situation! We all have a great work to do, and the whole of our lives will not be more than sufficient for its accomplishment. If half thy life, or more than half of it, be already spent, and little or none of that work done, it is high time *now* to begin it in earnest. Oh, spend no more of thy precious time in wantonness and forgetfulness of God. Remember, that in order to be saved we must all be turned from darkness to light,—must pass from death unto life,—must be born again and become new creatures. We must cease to do evil, otherwise we cannot learn to do well, consequently cannot be happy. "Without holiness," said the apostle, "no man shall see the Lord." We must, therefore, become holy in all manner of conversation. Those who are living in pleasure, gratifying their sensual appetites, are dead while they live. They who are delighting themselves in vanity, pleasing themselves with all the gaieties of life, are not walking in the narrow way, which only "leads to life" and peace: The other way, which is broad and easy to the flesh, our Lord declares "leadeth to destruction." Death and darkness will be the end and certain consequence of continuing in that way. Considering the uncertainty of life, it is a concern of vast importance to know that our day's work is going on with the day, for the night cometh, and is rapidly aproaching to us all, when no man can work.

I have a strong desire, that thou, my dear cousin, and all my relations in your part of the country, may be effectually roused to a solid consideration of this momentous subject. "One thing is needful:" and I greatly desire that thou mayest choose that good part which can never be taken from thee. The apostle, in a solemn manner, declares, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the

body, ye shall live;" and Christ says, "whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple." These are the unalterable terms of salvation—the only way to peace here, and everlasting felicity in the life which is to come.

Now I desire thee and all my relations to consider these things in a solid, weighty manner. Do not make a light matter of that which is of *everlasting importance*, but examine the subject closely,—ponder it solemnly. See whether you are denying yourselves,—and taking up your cross daily; without which you cannot lay hold of the everlasting crown.

My kind love and hearty good wishes are to and for you all, desiring you may live and die in peace. From thy uncle,

DAVID FERRIS.

WILMINGTON, y^e^ 20th of 3d mo. 1777.

Respected Friend, Moses Brown:—

After kind love presented to thee, thy mother, and sister Mary, with all thy family, this may inform that John Perry and I have received our Certificate, which we understand came through thy hands to William Wilson. William writes to me that the people on Rhode Island are under difficulties owing to the quartering of soldiers upon them. There have been no very heavy burdens laid on us here, in that way; but we have had a great many sick soldiers among us, and hundreds of them have died of the camp fever. Several of the inhabitants have taken it from them, and have also died.

When opportunity offers I should be glad to hear what has become of poor T. D.—whether he has come down from his lofty seat and high imaginations, so as to submit to the advice of his best friends. Having myself been favored with a heavenly visitation, and called out of the

forms and outside shows of religion, into an acquaintance, in some measure, with the divine substance, I am often thoughtful about and concerned for others, who have heard and obeyed the call. And I think I may just say I have felt and do feel some desires for the prosperity of Truth in your part of the country, and especially for the preservation of such as have been convinced of the Truth, and obeyed the heavenly call, so as to turn their backs upon the fading pleasures of this world: such as have denied themselves, and have taken up the cross, so as to have come away from the barren mountains of an empty profession, and become fools for Christ's sake. I greatly desire you may all steadily persevere in the way that will end in peace. I have found by experience that being convinced of the principle of Truth, and forsaking the vanities of the world, and seeing the emptiness of all external forms of religion, and turning from them, and joining with those who worship God in spirit and in truth (as to the outward fellowship) is not sufficient for salvation, without coming into Christ "the true vine," and truly abiding in him, so as to receive nourishment from him, and life daily springing up through him. I cannot therefore well do less than press all Friends who have been lately convinced of the blessed Truth, to dwell low, under a daily concern and care to shun the friendships of the world,—to take heed to themselves,—to look to their standing,—to their living, and walking, as becomes an enlightened people, who have been visited by the Dayspring from on high, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death;—remembering that they are no longer safe than during their continuance in a low state,—in a life of self-denial under the Cross of Christ.

The apostle tells us that, it had been better for us not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after we have known it to turn from the holy commandment.

I thought it could not be amiss to give a caution on this wise, though I hope better things of many of you,

who have been blessed with a visitation of light and life, than that you should turn back and forsake the way of Truth :—but some have done so, and others may do so; and as it is of the utmost consequence to us, that we continue steadfast to the end, love moves me thus to write. Let us take the apostle's advice to the Galatians, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." We have many enemies that oppose our progress heavenward. There is no safety unless we keep upon the watch tower, and dwell near the fountain of life. If that be our constant care, we shall become as lights to the world; as the salt of the earth, as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid. We shall be as way-marks to others,—as good examples to the flock,—all which is required of those whose eyes have been opened to see the beauty there is in the Truth. If you who have received the anointing, are faithful to the manifestations of divine Grace, you will be made instrumental in spreading its holy influence among the people. The heavenly regard is toward the people of Providence and parts adjacent. It is a day of visitation to the several professions, and I believe more will be manifest, if those who are enlightened walk worthy of their vocation, and dwell in a grateful sense of the blessings received.

From thy well-wishing friend,

DAVID FERRIS.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

JUN -5 '51 H

CANCELLED

STATE STUDY

CHARGE

JAN 8 '65 H

463 269

CANCELLED

MAY 29 1980

DUE WID

1980

Memoirs of the life of David Ferris
Widener Library 002962784
3 2044 081 818 569